

ERASTI

BY

ERASTUS E

TIANISM

BY
S. EVANS, M.A.

The University of Chicago
Libraries





ERASTIANISM

ERASTIANISM

The Hulsean Prize Essay, 1931,
in the University of Cambridge

By
ERASTUS EVANS, M.A.

LONDON
THE EPWORTH PRESS
(EDGAR C. BARTON)
25-35 CITY ROAD, E.C.1

BY631
.E84

First Edition, 1933



*Made and Printed in Great Britain by
Rush & Warwick (Bedford) Ltd., Harpur Printing Works, Bedford*

1341

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
	BIBLIOGRAPHY - - - - -	7
I.	THE TERM - - - - -	11
	THE RELATION OF ERASTUS TO ERASTIANISM.	
II.	MOTIVES TO ERASTIANISM - - - -	46
	1. THE INTELLECTUAL MOTIVE - - -	47
	2. THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVE - - -	58
	3. THE POLITICAL MOTIVE - - -	70
III.	THE PROBLEM OF ERASTIANISM - - -	76

BIBLIOGRAPHY

It will be seen that I am greatly indebted to the writings of Dr. J. Neville Figgis. I acknowledge this debt with particularity and emphasis. I am also indebted to Dr. Alexander Nairne for reading this essay in MS. and for helpful suggestions.

The following books were used in the compilation of this essay :—

CHAPTER I—THE TERM

The Theses of Erastus. Translated by the Rev. Robert Lee, D.D. Edinburgh, 1844.

K. Südhoff. Part VIII of *Leben u. Ausgewählte Schriften der Väter*, &c. Elberfeld, 1857. Book III. Chapter III. *Die Kämpfe wegen der Kirchengzucht.*

J. Neville Figgis, 'Erastus and Erastianism,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, v., ii. 1900. pp. 66-101.

Auguste Bonnard, *Thomas Eraste et la discipline ecclésiastique.* Lausanne, 1894.

CHAPTER II—MOTIVES TO ERASTIANISM

J. N. Figgis, *Churches and the Modern State* (second edition). 1914.

J. N. Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius* (second edition). 1916.

Otto Gierke (translated by Maitland), *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*.

Principal Rainy, Lecture I. (Church and State from Constantine) in *Church and State in Scotland*. 1878.

Baynes, *The Byzantine Empire*. 1925.

W. Hobhouse, *The Church and the World in Idea and in History*. Bampton Lectures, 1909.

Bury's *Earlier History of Later Roman Empire*. 1889.

Hobbes, *Leviathan*.

Luther, *Von Weltlicher Obrigkeit*.

G. P. Fisher, *The Reformation*. 1906.

J. W. Allen, *Political Theory of the Sixteenth Century*.

Abraham, *Church and State in England*. 1905.

Mozley's *Essays on Luther, Laud, Strafford and Thomas Arnold*.

Stoughton, *Church and State Two Hundred Years Ago*. 1862.

Archdeacon Wilberforce, *A Sketch of the History of Erastianism* (second edition). 1851.

Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staatsräson in der neueren Geschichte* (second edition). 1925.

A. F. Pollard, *Thomas Cranmer and the English Reformation*. 1904.

C. H. Smyth, *Cranmer and the Reformation*.

CHAPTER III—THE PROBLEM OF ERASTIANISM

Creighton, *The Church and the Nation*. 1901.

W. Temple, *Church and Nation*. 1915.

P. T. Forsyth, *Theology in Church and State*. 1915.

Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State. 1917.

J. C. Bluntschli, *Allgemeines Staatsrecht*. Volume II. Stuttgart, 1876.

Troeltsch, *Soziallehren*.

Von Hügel, *The Specific Genius of Christianity*, in *Essays and Addresses*, Volume I.

ERASTIANISM

CHAPTER I

THE TERM

THE RELATION OF ERASTUS TO ERASTIANISM

FIGGIS pertinently asks, 'Was Erastus an Erastian?' The question suggests three lines of inquiry. In the first place; what precisely was the thought of Erastus? What was its purpose, and within what limits did it move? In what historical situation was it born, what pressure brought about its development, and what significance is to be given to it?

Thus it will be necessary for us to inquire into the course of the controversy in which he was engaged in order to find if Erastus had a consistent attitude in it, and what light his situation and his actions give to define his opinions more precisely. We must then examine in some degree the objects his opponents had in view, so that we may give the writings which he wrote against them their correct limitation. Finally, we will need to examine his works in the light of the two preceding considerations, that we may know from his own pen what his purpose and teaching were.

In the second place, we will be constrained to ask, 'What are we to take the term "Erastianism" to

mean?' Are we to give it a broad or a narrow signification? Here also we will need to compare our definition with what Erastus taught, and to show differences between them. This will bring us to our last consideration.

Thirdly, if the teachings of Erastus and Erastianism are not the same, why is Erastus's name used to describe a theory which was not actually his? Is this to be accounted for by some historical contingency? Did the teaching of Erastus logically imply Erastianism?

That an inquiry into the precise thought of Erastus is necessary is shown by the ignorance which many who use the term 'Erastianism' show of it. Robert Lee, in his preface to his translation of the *Theses*, deplors the ignorance of those who used it in the 'late ecclesiastical controversy' (at the time when the secession from the Established Church of Scotland took place, which gave birth to the Free Church) as a term of abuse for the State Church. He asks ironically, 'Was it that the term unexplained served its purpose fully as well as it would have done if those who heard it had known what the abomination was at which they were taught to shudder?' Not only was this the case in Scotland but Lee's protest might be urged with equal force against the Anglican Archdeacon Wilberforce who (writing on Erastianism in 1851, seven years after Lee made the above statement) shows an engaging ignorance of Erastus's thought. Wilberforce, who has been dealing with the introduction of the 'Territorial System' or 'Pure Erastianism' into Germany, says, 'It had found

individual advocates long before the time of Thomasius and had received its more usual title from Thomas Lieber. Erastus had denied the Church's power of excommunication, and in consequence had been led to affirm that the jurisdiction, by which it is determined what her pastors shall teach and her people must believe, is derived exclusively from the civil magistrate. His work, published after his death, gave the title of Erastianism to the system which teaches that the civil magistrate has not only a peculiar commission, as being invested by divine appointment with a place in the Church's administrations (which the Episcopal system was ready to allow), but that he possesses this by inherent authority whether he be Christian or no; further that he is not bound to refer to the Church, as directed by supernatural guidance in the discovery of Truth.'¹

Now, as will be demonstrated later, Erastus certainly did not teach that the civil magistrate had the exclusive right to determine the teaching and belief of the Church. Doctrine and belief are not under discussion in his writings, but the question as to administration of discipline. Erastus assumes that the Church is in possession of orthodox doctrine which the Prince accepts.

Wilberforce's implication that Erastus taught that the magistrate had authority over the Church whether he were Christian or no, shows no knowledge of the careful distinction which he makes between the duty of the Church with regard to a

¹ Archdeacon R. I. Wilberforce, *A Sketch of the History of Erastianism*, 1851. p. 36.

Christian monarch, and that in relation to a heathen. The passage quoted illustrates an ignorance which is general even among writers on Erastianism, as to the position of Erastus.

Although the term is no longer in usage as an adjective of ecclesiastical abuse, the ignorance as to its derivation and appropriateness which characterized its users is still general.

Before proceeding to the elucidation of Erastus's thought, it will be helpful to give a brief sketch of his life and his character, and to enumerate his works.

Thomas Lieber or Lüber (hence the name Erastus) was born at Baden in Switzerland, on September 7, 1524. He came under the influence of the Zwinglian form of the Reformed religion, and there is no evidence that he at any time inclined to another. In 1542 he matriculated at Basel, where he attached himself to the philosophical faculty, and studied classics, mathematics and theology. After two years a visitation of the plague caused him to leave Basel for Italy, where he appears to have been supported by some rich patron. He spent three years at Bologna and six at Padua, greatly distinguished by his studies in medicine. In Italy he married a lady of noble birth, who, when a widow, married the man who posthumously published his works. Erastus then spent some years as Court physician at Henneberg. He was an exponent of the most enlightened medical science of his time, and wrote on this subject, works larger and more numerous than the little volume by which we remember him. He was an opponent of Paracelsus.

He counted among his friends Beza at Geneva and Bullinger and Gwalther at Zürich. In 1557 he was invited at the same time to the courts of Dresden and Heidelberg; he chose Heidelberg where Elector Otto Heinrich was founding a chair of Therapeutics. Erastus left Heidelberg in 1576 when a prince of Lutheran sympathies succeeded Frederick III, who was a pious Calvinist. He was accorded a distinguished welcome at Basel, where he lectured at the university on Ethics, and ended his life there in 1583.

There has been no lack of detractors of Erastus, from Olevianus down to Südhoff, who have sought some base motive for the attitude he took in the controversy concerning discipline. Lee quotes James Ferguson of Kilwinning as saying concerning Erastianism, 'Erastus, the prime author of the doctrine *upon some discontent* did first vent it.'¹ It was such words that called forth the heated rejoinder of Melchior Adams: 'Seeing so famous men, both of his own and other professions, have publicly acknowledged his piety and learning, I think they must be cursedly distracted of their wits, or of a very evil nature, that will rather believe the pedantic Machiavelian calumny of his enemies (who only in this went beyond him) than the honourable reports of such illustrious and grave personages.'

We are familiar with extravagant censure of protagonists in religious controversy, and Erastus became peculiarly open to such because of his unfortunate association with Neuser and Sylvanus,

¹Translator's Preface to *Theses of Erastus*. Edinburgh, 1844.

but the scanty knowledge we have of his character does not tend to substantiate it. As the leader of his party Erastus had the power of attracting loyalty. He was a sincere friend of inquiry and a great assailant of impostures such as alchemy and astrology, although he still believed in witchcraft. It was by his influence in the academic senate that the printer, Ludwig Lück, was granted a subsidy to open a publishing house at Heidelberg. He encouraged free discussion. 'He did wonderfully extoll school disputes,' says Melchior Adams, which he regarded as the best method of exercising the intelligence and forming the judgement. He scoffed at the theological professors who would prevent any layman from expressing an opinion on matters within their province, 'As though the command "Search the Scriptures" were merely given to them that teach theology at a yearly salary of 100 florins.'¹

Erastus was certainly respectable, as he became a lay member of the 'Kirchenrath,' the highest Church authority of the Palatinate in 1558. He was trusted by the Elector, published books at his command, and was selected by him on one occasion to debate against the Lutherans. As Bonnard says, an examination of Erastus's life at Heidelberg before the discipline controversy shows him to have been a distinguished physician, a theologian of merit, an influential member of the ecclesiastical authorities of the Electorate, and a zealous defender of the reformed belief.

Erastus published several theological works

¹ Preface of Erastus to the *Theses*. Lee's Translation.

besides those connected with the discipline controversy. Two of these related to the Sacrament. 'A thorough statement of how Christ's words "This is My body," are to be understood,'¹ written against the Lutherans at the Elector's command, and the reply to the attack of Johann Marbach of Strasbourg upon it—'A firm refutation of the groundless accusation by means of which D. Johann Marbach presumes to make suspect the physician T. Erastus's booklet concerning the meaning of Christ's words: "This is My body," &c.'² Bonnard also attributes an anonymous booklet on the Sacrament to Erastus. Two were written in controversy with Schegk about the nature of Christ: 'An exposition of Schegk's book concerning the one person and the two natures of Christ,' and 'Erastus's reply to Schegk's pamphlet.'³

The two works which concern us are the *Theses* and the *Confirmation of the Theses*. The former was commenced as the preface, 'To the Pious Reader' tells us, in 1568. A copy of it was sent to Beza at Geneva, who disagreed with Erastus and wrote a reply to him. 'A devout and restrained Treatise concerning Excommunication' the longest and most

¹ Grundtlicher bericht wie die wort Christi: Dass ist mein leib etc. zu verstehen seien, auss den worten der einsetzung und der erclarung Christi selbst genommen: darauss ein jeder leicht lernen mag, wessen er sich in diesem zanckt verhalten solle. 1562.

² Beständige Ableinung der Ungegründten beschuldigung damit D. Johann Marbach das Büchlein Thomae Erasti medici vom verstand der wort Christi. Dass ist mein leib etc. unterstehet verdecktig zu machen. 1565.

³ Declaratio libri Schegkii de una persona et duabus naturis Christi (Geneva, 1566) and Responsio Erasti ad libellum Schegkii (Geneva, 1567).

important contemporary reply to Erastus, respectful in tone but uncompromisingly on the side of the discipline. The *Confirmatio Thesium* contains Erastus's reply to Beza's criticisms. The *Theses* were originally one hundred in number and were circulated in MS. form among the students, where they created much excitement. Erastus later tightened his argument and reduced the *Theses* to seventy-five.

It was not until 1589, six years after the death of its author that, to the intense annoyance of Beza who declared that Erastus was troubling men even from the grave, the *Theses* and the *Confirmatio* were published under the title 'An exposition of the most important question whether excommunication, in so far as it restrains those who understand and receive religion from the use of the sacraments on account of criminal action, rests on a Divine injunction or is devised by men.'¹ The indignation which the opinions contained in it were likely to raise, caused the printer to suppress his name and the place of publication on the title page of the original edition and to substitute 'Baicius Sultaceterus' and 'Pesclavii.' He described his action as due to a death-bed wish of Erastus and the love of truth. (Figgis caustically comments that it was probably due to the love of money.) The place of publication was in reality London; Castelfeltro (the husband of Erastus's widow) was the editor and John Wolf was the publisher, and the work

¹ *Explicatio gravissimae quaestionis, utrum Excommunicatio, quatenus Religionem intellegentes et amplexantes, a Sacramentorum usu propter admissum facinus arcet; mandato nitatur Divino, an excogitata sit ab hominibus.*

appeared at a psychological moment in the English disciplinarian controversy, so much so that Whitgift was suspected by Beza of having instigated the publishing. The work was reprinted at Amsterdam in 1649. An English translation of the *Theses* appeared at another opportune moment, the year before the Restoration. This version, says Lee, 'is so literal, as often to be hardly intelligible and is moreover very inaccurately printed. For these blemishes the Translator apologizes in the quaint Epistle to the reader—"Pardon the errors of the press in this edition, for my amanuensis and corrector are Presbyterians."'¹

I do not know of any other rendering of Erastus's works into English until Lee's translation of the *Theses* in 1844.

The first interest of the Reformers was in Doctrine. However it is obvious that their new emphasis on certain Truths carried with it not merely a doctrinal break with the Roman Church, but also the necessity of building up a new Church order and discipline in their light. The task thus set before them lent itself to great disagreement as to method, and the controversy concerning discipline in which Erastus was involved at Heidelberg was one of the many quarrels which ensued as a result. The quarrel occurred within the Palatinate Reformed Church, after all other Protestant competitors had lost their power, and when she, as the recognized Church, set about ordering her own house. The question of discipline could only become a major issue when the Church was not in conflict

¹ Translator's Preface to the *Theses*.

with any other Protestant body and had leisure to consider her own life. When Erastus first entered Heidelberg in 1557, it merited Figgis's description of it as a refuge for the theological eccentrics of all nations.¹ The Elector, Otto Heinrich, was a tolerant Lutheran. In the State there were two parties, Lutheran and Swiss in sympathy. The Lutherans were of two descriptions, the strict Lutherans and the followers of Melancthon. The Swiss also were divided into followers of Calvin and of Zwingli. Erastus quickly became the most distinguished representative of the latter party. Each of these parties gained ascendancy in turn in Heidelberg; the controversy occurred while the Swiss parties were in control and ended when an Elector of Lutheran sympathies came to the throne.

After his arrival in Heidelberg, Erastus quickly distinguished himself by his service against the Lutherans. He incurred their hatred by his successful support of Etienne Sylvius, who (probably because he was himself a Zwinglian) refused to do the bidding of Hesshus and attack the sacramental doctrine of the Roman Church and that of the Zwinglian alike. When in 1559 Otto Heinrich died and Fredrick III, who was a man of strong Calvinist prejudices, succeeded him, the Swiss parties exercised every influence to make their own form of religion that of the State and to have all others proscribed. Olevianus, one of the leaders of the Calvinist Swiss party, was so successful in his purpose that in August, 1560, the Elector definitely

¹ *Journal of Theological Studies*, v. ii., 1900, p. 69.

introduced the Reformed faith and proscribed alike Catholicism and Lutheranism. It is noteworthy that Erastus secured the enthusiastic praise of Olevianus for the part which he played in bringing about this result. It aids us to limit Erastus's purpose in opposing the ecclesiastical discipline. Whatever was his end in doing this, it was not to secure freedom of thought and religious forms within the State. The Reformers generally were not interested in spiritual freedom but in establishing the right form of religion. Their attitude is exemplified in that of the English reformers in the time of Edward VI, and that of John Knox in Scotland. Erastus was no exception and had no qualms about seeing the 'true' religion established in the land by the arbitrary action of the magistrate. He had no objection to seeing religion established by what we might call Erastian methods, as long as it was what he conceived to be the true religion.

It is interesting to glance at the character of Frederick III, for it sheds some light on what Erastus had in his mind when he spoke of the 'Godly prince,' a person to whom he attributed much importance. Frederick III was a man of austere piety, who took a great interest in theological matters, and was always willing to listen to the advice of the doctors of the Church, as his attitude in the controversy shows. Even when it was a matter of executing a traitor, he did this by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. He decided to execute Sylvanus for his heresy and treason, in virtue, he said, of a special gift of the Holy Ghost, the guide into all truth. This saying shows that he regarded

himself, as Erastus seems to regard him, as having a quasi-priestly function. When we realize what Erastus meant by the phrase 'the civil magistrate' we see that whatever his enthusiasm may have been to introduce the 'true' religion by Erastian methods, he was far from advocating that unscrupulous Erastianism which is illustrated by Hobbes, and advocated passive obedience, without regard to the religion and religious character of the Prince.

The question of a Church discipline within the Palatinate had been raised as early as 1556. In that year was promulgated the first ecclesiastical ordinance within the Palatinate since the Reformation—'Church Discipline. How matters stand with regard to Christian Doctrine, the Holy Sacraments and Ceremonies in the domains of the most illustrious and right honourable prince and Lord of Lords Otto Heinrich, Count Palatine by the Rhine.'¹ This book prescribed that the Sacrament should be refused to those who persisted in their impenitence after being convicted of wicked behaviour. At the end of the same year, after a general inspection of the Church of the Palatinate, the inspectors, among whom were two Lutheran ecclesiastics, Johann Marbach and Johann Flinner, addressed a detailed report to the Elector with a memorial indicating desirable reforms. 'A consideration as to how the deficiencies and faults discovered in the Palatine Church inspection may be

¹ 'Kirchenordnung. Wie es mit der Christenlichen Leere, Heiligen Sacramenten und Ceremonien inn des Durchleuchtigsten Hochgebornen, Fürsten u: Herren Herrn Ottheinrichs, Pfaltzgraven bei Rhein.'

corrected.’¹ They suggested that three churchwardens (Kirchenpfleger) should be chosen from the most pious and capable men in each community, who should have charge, in particular, of watching over the conduct of members and even of pronouncing exclusions when acting in conjunction with the pastor.

The matter was left in abeyance for some years. It was after the religious transformation at the beginning of Frederick’s reign that the question was re-opened. Calvin’s influence, which had long been felt in French-speaking reformed Churches and at Strasbourg, now began to be felt in the Palatinate. Calvin’s principal intermediary here was Gaspard Olevianus, who had been under his influence since conversion, had heard him at Geneva, and was in personal relation with him. Olevianus had attempted the evangelization of his native place Trèves, at the age of twenty-three, and had been imprisoned by the Archbishop as a result. He was released by the influence of Frederick and given the chair of Dogmatics at Heidelberg university, which had been vacant since the dismissal of Hesshus, early in 1560. Already in April of that year Olevianus wrote to Calvin, asking him to describe exactly the functions of the consistory at Geneva, and when the latter lingered before replying, he wrote again, saying that in his opinion a strongly organized discipline should be decreed and put into action vigorously, before the population

¹Bedenken wie die Mangel und Fel in Pfelzischen Kirchenvisitation befunden, zu verbessern seyen. Published entirely in C. Schmidt, ‘Der Teil der Strasburger an der Ref: in Churpfalz.’ Strassburg, 1856.

of the country was delivered from the Lutheran yoke. The matter, however, moved very slowly for some time. Later in 1562 Olevianus announced to Calvin, that the Elector had recognized the necessity of a discipline and appointed two of his counsellors to study the question along with the ecclesiastical council. Olevianus complains, however, of opposition from those who believed in human wisdom, 'That idol cut from the wood of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,' and from certain lawyers (lawyers were also in the forefront of the opposition to the Presbyterian discipline when it was attempted to introduce it into England during the Westminster Assembly). Olevianus asked the counsel of Calvin on one point. He mentions the number of authorities already existing in Heidelberg (the court, the town authorities, the University Senate, the ecclesiastical council), hence he suggests that perhaps the best method of making a presbytery would be to take the representatives of different authorities along with the pastors of the town. Calvin approved this suggestion and told him not to be discouraged by difficulties.

The extremely energetic efforts of Olevianus were rewarded when his principles were accepted in three official documents; the first of these was the Heidelberg Catechism. It declared that impenitent sinners who, after due warning given refused to alter their behaviour, should be excluded from the Sacrament, and that they would be excluded by God from Christ's Kingdom. We cite Article 85. 'That according to Christ's command those who under cover of the Christian name conduct themselves

according to unchristian doctrine or behaviour after they have been admonished several times in a brotherly fashion and do not cease from their errors or views shall be noted by the Church or by those thereto appointed by the Church, and if they do not heed the same admonition shall be excluded by them from the Christian Communion through prohibition of the Holy Sacrament *and by God Himself from the Kingdom of Christ*. They shall be received again as Members of Christ and the Church when they promise and manifest true reformation.’¹ The second was the Ecclesiastical Ordinance of November 15, 1563, which carried matters a step farther in that it laid down more precisely the manner in which the discipline was to be administered. The disciplinary authority was to lie in a body of honourable and God-fearing men chosen from the local ‘Gemeinde.’ ‘On this account several honourable and God-fearing men shall be appointed in each place according to its opportunity and requirement from the congregation, who shall conscientiously and earnestly admonish to reformation a first, second, and third time according to the occasion, such persons as are a scandal either through

¹ Also: dass nach dem befehl Christi diejenigen so under dem Christlichen namen unchristliche lehr oder wandel führen, nachdem sie etlich mal brüderlich vermanet sein und von iren irtumen oder lastern nit abstehen, der Kirchen, oder denen so von der Kirchen darzu verordnet sind, angezeigt und so sie sich an derselben vermanung auch nit keren, von inen durch verbietung der heiligen Sacrament auss der Christlichen gemein und von Gott Selbst auss dem Reich Christi werden ausgeschlossen und wiederum als glieder Christi und der Kirchen angenommen wenn sie ware besserung verheissen und erzeugen. Jubilee Edition. New York, 1863. Bonnard Note on p. 35.

dangerous errors or because of their mode of life, and if these people do not regard this to separate them from the Christian Communion by refusal of the Holy Sacraments until they promise and manifest reformation. A further ordinance shall appear describing procedure in this matter.'¹

Neither of the two documents just mentioned, took positive measures with regard to the discipline. This is not surprising as the first was intended to be an exposition of doctrine, and the second was essentially liturgical in content. The ordinance as we see above, limited itself to a reference to a coming decree. This was the third document which appeared on July 21, 1564.

It described the functions of the ecclesiastical council, which, besides the power of nominating and deposing pastors, had the provisional one also of the general surveillance of matters pertaining to discipline. It declared that Christian discipline was distinct from civil authority, and that nevertheless the first condition of its possibility and efficiency was that on their side the magistrates should be vigilant to make the laws of the State respected and

¹ Derhalben an jedem ort nach gelegenheit und notdurft desselben, etliche erbare und Gott fürchtige menner auss der gemein sollen verordnet werden, welche von wegen, und in namen der gantzen gemein neben der Kirchendienern solche Personen, die entweder mit gefehrlichen irrthummen des glaubens oder mit irem leben ergerlich sind . . . zum ersten andern und dritten mal, nach gelegenheit der sachen zur besserung, treulich und ernstlich vermanen und so sie sich daran nicht keren mit verbietung der Heiligen Sacramenten von der Christlichen gemein absondern biss sie besserung verheissen und erzeigen. Und soll auch, wie hierin es procedirt werden solle, ferner verordnung geschehen. The ordinance is given in extenso by Richter Die evang. Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts ii. Weimar 1846. p. 257.

to punish its violations severely. Pastors were not to cease warning their parishioners from the pulpit. Where they did not heed these warnings, they were to be reported to the ecclesiastical council. If the matter could not be settled there, it was to be taken before the Prince who should examine it along with the council. It was to the Prince that the right was reserved to pronounce excommunication (public exclusion from the Sacrament) and other penalties that he might think proper. The tone of this ordinance was that of wishing to begin action at once, as the following extracts show. 'The other injunction of our Church council is that the Christian discipline, which is different from the office of the secular authority and kept up in our Churches in strict accordance with the word of God, should be exercised as much as possible.' 'That it is not enough to make an idle boast of the name of Christian but that it is necessary to demonstrate our Christianity by a Christian, honourable, and sincere life, character, and behaviour.'¹

This then, is a history of the matter, prior to the controversy which broke out in 1568. It seems curious that Erastus took no part in opposing these initial steps. His violent opposition commenced

¹ 'Der ander Befehl Unssers Kirchen Raths soll in diessem stehen dass auch die Christliche Disciplina, welche von dem Ambt der weltlichen Obrigkeit unterschieden ist, u: in der Straff mit dem Wort Gottes stehet in Unssern Kirchen erhalten, soviel möglich exerciret werde' . . . 'dass es nicht genug seie, sich vergeblichen mit dem Nahmen eines Christen zu rühmen, sondern von nöthen dass Wir solchen Unssern Titul u: Christenthumb mit der That, dass ist mit einem Christlichen, ehrbahren auffrichtigen leben Weesen u: Wandel erzeugen.' Quoted by Bonnard in footnote, p. 37, from Richter.

when George Withers put forward his two famous Theses. Erastus explains his own silence, in the preface to the Theses, by declaring that he assumed that the advocates of discipline were right and that excommunication was commanded by Holy Writ. Still, we need an explanation as to why he was so suddenly thrown into doubt on the point. Evidently Erastus did not realize at first the tremendous authority which was claimed by the disciplinarians and was implied in their assumption of the right to refuse the Sacrament. Until those Theses were published, disciplinary measures were ultimately controlled by the Elector, who as we have seen above, alone had right to pronounce excommunication. It was not to be long before this trammel was thrust off, and the supremacy of ecclesiastical power declared in absolute terms.

George Withers had been pastor of Bury St. Edmunds in Suffolk, and had been ejected for protesting against Elizabeth's ordinances concerning Church vestments. He had been sent by his party to enlist the aid of foreign Protestant leaders. We hear of him in this capacity at Geneva. He appeared at Heidelberg presumedly on this business and taking advantage of his proximity to a famous university, became a candidate for a doctorate. He offered certain Theses concerning vestments for discussion, but these were rejected by the university authorities, who did not wish to incur the animosity of Elizabeth against the Palatinate. They proposed as an alternative subject the question of excommunication, thus drawing forth Erastus's comment that

they cared more for peace with England than peace within their own doors.

Accordingly the debate opened on June 10, 1568, under the presidency of the Dean of the Faculty, Peter Boquinus.

Among the Theses presented by Withers are the following, as given by Südhoff.

12. It is necessary for the genuine preaching of the Divine Word and the proper administration of Holy Sacrament that the Office of Government in the Church should rule powerfully.

13. But this office is so constituted that the ministers together with the Presbytery, who have and exercise the power, should admonish, punish and excommunicate every Sinner (including Princes as well) and make use of all that pertains to Church discipline.

It was this claim to the right to be able to excommunicate even the Prince, that must have brought home to Erastus the real significance of the discipline movement. From this time he becomes its most determined antagonist.

He was not present at this first dispute, and seems to have regarded it as an ordinary academic discussion. This first discussion seems to have been without loss of temper, but when it was resumed two days later, when Erastus was present, Neuser created a turmoil by declaring that the position taken by the advocates of the discipline was unscriptural. The dispute at once became envenomed. The quarrel was open between Olevianus and Erastus. Men who had come under the direct or indirect influence of Calvin grouped themselves

about the former. Among them were Ursinus, Zanchius, Dathenus, Zuleger, Boquinus and Du Jon. They were mostly men who had suffered persecution for their faith, and were of the most morally serious type. Erastus's spiritual conceptions are of a much inferior calibre to those of his opponents. Still, he is to be placed far above the men who supported him, among whom were Adam Neuser, a worldling; Sylvanus, a light intellectual; Willing, a preacher ambitious for popularity; and Sigismond Melancthon, the nephew of the Reformer. These men cannot be described as of a uniform theological tendency: they were banded together from the most mixed and varied motives.

Abroad, Erastus received support from Gwalther and Bullinger of Zürich, although it was not clearly pronounced; while Beza, at Geneva, came to the aid of the disciplinarians.

It is interesting to note the position of the Elector in the controversy. He had married the widow of Bredenrode, the Belgian noble. This had greatly pleased the disciplinarians, as it brought him into closer contact with the Calvinists of the Netherlands, and increased their ascendancy over him. Erastus bitterly complained of the influence which foreigners had acquired over his Prince. This illustrates the fact that Erastus objected thoroughly to Erastian methods, when they were not used to support what he conceived to be truth. Erastus was not concerned with the merits or demerits of an Erastian system, but with the propagation of truth. This becomes increasingly clear when we consider the attitude of Erastus to Ursinus. The

latter, along with Zanchius, had been requested by the Elector to furnish his opinions concerning the controversy. They both supported the discipline, but Ursinus made so many qualifications in favour of the civil power, that if it had been the object of Erastus merely to support the Prince, he would have agreed with him. Erastus, however, was more concerned about the truth concerning the claim to excommunicate.

The controversy was brought to a sudden end, and the resistance of Erastus to the discipline to a catastrophic conclusion, by the scandal which was raised over the affair of Neuser and Sylvanus. Kaiser Maximilian called a parliament at Speier in 1570, at which Frederick was present along with other princes. The object of the parliament was the formation of a defensive alliance against the Turks. Neuser and Sylvanus conspired to get letters across to the Transylvanian ambassador, in which they represented themselves as the leaders of a great party in Germany which denied the Godhead of Christ and the Trinity. When the Kaiser refused to make alliance with a nation that denied the Trinity, the ambassador produced the letters of Neuser and Sylvanus as proof of the existence of a large German party which would support him if he did so. The Kaiser naturally communicated this to Elector Frederick immediately. Neuser and Sylvanus were arrested. In Sylvanus's possession was found a writing with the title, 'Against the Triune God and the Two Nature Idols' ('Wider den Drei Persönlichen Gott und die Zwei Natur götzen'). The trial which followed was very long.

Frederick attempted to deal with the matter patiently and justly. Neuser escaped; he became first a Turk and then an Atheist, and died as the result of his scandalous life, if Strave is to be believed.¹

This event scared Frederick. On July 13, 1570, he gave the order to go on definitely with the Church discipline. This progressed quickly. In all the parishes of the Palatinate, Presbyteries were set up, formed of pastors and elders who had the censure of morals in the spirit of the Holy Scriptures, to the correction of the erring. Excommunication was to be used against the obstinate.

The discipline was now triumphant and continued so. On November 25, 1571, Olevianus announced the names of the Heidelberg Presbytery. Amongst them were representatives of the court, the pulpit, the university, the town council, and the bourgeoisie. There were still those who fought the discipline, notably Prof. Sigismond Melancthon, nephew of the famous Reformer.

Although in 1572 Erastus was again Rector of the University, the disciplinarians did not give him peace. He was excommunicated for two years,

¹ Er führte ein asotisches und unzüchtiges Leben, wodurch er sich eine garstige Krankheit an den Halz zog, von den Würmen angefressen wurde und an lebendigen Leib zu faulen begann also dass Niemand auch von Weiten um ihn sein könnte. Daruber gerieth er in solche Ungeduld und Desperation dass er Gott und alle Religion lästerlich verfluchte dergestalten dass die Turken selbst einen Abscheu an ihm hatten und ihn nur Satan Ogli d.h. Satan's Sohn nannten, wie er denn auch bald darauf unter grämlichen Heulen und Brüllen seine gottlose seele aufgab. Quoted by Südhoff not without relish.

1574-6. 'It may be,' says Figgis, 'that like Gibbon's hostility to the Revolution of which Bagehot says "the truth is that he had arrived at the conclusion he was one of those people revolutionists were likely to kill," that the animosity of Erastus to the discipline was inspired by a feeling that it would not leave him long unscathed.'

In 1576, the death of the Elector wrought another change. His son, who succeeded him, was a strict Lutheran. The discipline was swept away, and the Reformed parties united against the common enemy. Erastus resigned his professorship and left Heidelberg. Had he been an Erastian in the later meaning of the term, he would not have done this, for in the substitution of Lutheranism for the Reformed Faith, we have an instance of changing religion within the State by Erastian methods. Erastus was therefore consistent throughout, in holding the power of the State subservient to Truth.

This examination of the history of the Discipline Controversy is valuable in that it proves that Erastus was not directly concerned with the question of State Supremacy. The inconsistency of his behaviour towards the State demonstrated that he held no Erastian theory with regard to it. His allegiance to the State is always subservient to his adherence to what he conceived to be truth. We can therefore declare categorically that Erastus's behaviour in the controversy proves that he held no Erastian theory of the State.

We are now thrown back on another question. Was Erastus an Erastian by implication? Although

his behaviour proves that he was not actually an Erastian in Hobbes' sense, does the fact that he combated the Church implicate him indirectly in Erastianism? Later on, the situation was such that if men rejected the absolute authority of the Church, they were forced to postulate the supremacy of the State. Was such the case with Erastus? Are the objects which his opponents had in view, of such a kind as to imply an imminent clash of two absolute authorities?

The object which the disciplinarians had in view is clear enough. It was to produce by authoritative measures, the moral reforms which persuasion had been unable to effect. Two considerations made them advocates of the discipline. Firstly, the low moral condition of the Palatinate Churches called for stringent measures. Secondly, the alien Calvinist communities which had settled in the Palatinate, were the envy of the leaders of the Palatinate Church, in consequence of their strictly Godly and moral life; and it was amongst them that the discipline had long been practised.

The low moral condition of the Palatinate is illustrated by Ursinus's letter to Bullinger, dated September 20, 1568, in which he says that while God has befreesd them from idolatry, there have ensued boundless lawlessness, profanation of the Divine Name, of the pure doctrine of the Church and the Sacraments. Those in a position to prevent these abuses have connived at them or at least not prohibited them, so that holy things are being trampled under foot by swine and dogs. He fears the punishment of a wrathful God on this account

since these things not only exist but receive public approbation.¹

The above extract reminds us how far the people generally were behind the leaders of the Churches in the Reformation of religion. The temptation that lies nearest to those zealous for a speedy reformation, namely, to achieve it by force and authority rather than by the persuasive power of the truth, was too strong for the leaders of the Palatinate Church. They sought to reform men by compulsion, just at the moment when they were bewildered by rapid changes, and required most to be persuaded.

Erastus declares that twenty-nine out of every thirty of the people were alienated already by the religious attitude of Frederick III, and that what was required was not discipline, but some means of bringing people into the Church.² But whether the people were to be reformed by gentle or compulsory methods, the need for moral reform was great. That is demonstrated by the above extract from Ursinus, whom Südhoff describes as a gentle and peaceful man, and whom we have already seen to be in no way disposed to claim com-

¹ *Liberavit nos Deus ab idolatria: Succedit licentia infinita et horribilis divini nominis, ecclesiae doctrinae purioris et sacramentorum prophanatio et sub pedibus porcorum et canum, conniventibus atque utinam non defenditibus iis qui prohibere suo loco debebant, conculcatio. Quae res profecto facit, ut poenas ab irato Deo nobis imminere metuam. Tolerat Deus in sua ecclesia multos et magnos mancos ac defectus. Sed cum publica et ex professo suscepta illorum approbatio et defensio accedit, solet exardescere Nemesis divina.* Quoted by Südhoff, *Leben u: ausgewählte Schriften der Väter*, etc. pt. VIII. Bk. 3. Chap. 3.

² Cf. Lee's Translation, p. 2.

plete ascendancy for the Church over the State power.

It is clear that the immediate object of those who favoured the discipline, was not to obtain ascendancy over the State, but to bring up the moral and spiritual life of the Palatinate Church to the level of the alien Calvinist communities who had settled among them.

Now in those communities their discipline was not merely one of the conditions of their Church, but the expression of its very life. Their type of piety was inextricably bound up with the discipline; hence the attempt to introduce their moral spirit carried with it the effort to bring in the discipline.

The above consideration of the objects that the opponents of Erastus had in view shows that the question of which was supreme—the Church or the State—was never really in the foreground. The controversy was concerned with the righteousness of achieving reform by a particular discipline. That there was no real clash between the powers of the Church and State is shown by the favourable attitude which Frederick III maintained throughout to the discipline.

At the same time, although the controversy was one which was mainly concerned with the justice of a certain method of reform, it was bound to raise in time the larger issue of the relation of Church and State. It is a tribute to Erastus's acumen that he saw the tremendous implications of the claim to the right to excommunicate, even before the monarch himself.

In what manner the discipline controversy was

bound to raise the question of whether Church or State was to be regarded as supreme, is a matter with which we must deal when we inquire why the theory known as Erastianism came to receive that name.

Our researches into the history of the discipline controversy, together with our delimitation of the purposes of the supporters of the discipline have not resulted in showing any direct relation between Erastus and Erastianism. We have left our last line of inquiry. Is there anything in the writings of Erastus which makes this relation definite? When a man writes against, or in support of, anything, he is often driven to theorising, and even if he does not actually base his arguments upon a theory, to make statements into which such a theory could be read. Is there anything in the trend of Erastus's argument, or in any particular statement of his, which would make the attribution of an Erastian theory to him intelligible?

An examination of the *Theses* and the *Confirmatio* with this question in mind yields disappointing results. At the outset of the *Theses* it is clear that Erastus intends to deal with the question of excommunication alone, and he adheres strictly to his subject. One of his fundamental reasons for combating it becomes apparent at once, namely, that the claim to the right to excommunicate, really is an assumption of divine powers, in that only God can judge men's hearts truly. After stating this, and defining what he means by excommunication, Erastus proceeds to show that it has no scriptural warrant. An examination of the

law of Moses shows that the arguments of those who lay claim to it have no foundation, since legal uncleanness cannot be taken as a symbol of sin, and the Sacraments of the Old Testament, such as the Paschal feast, were not refused to the wicked but actually enjoined upon them, on pain of punishment. Nor do its advocates receive support from the New Testament; the great passage on which they base their claims, Matthew xviii., has reference to private injuries, and not to Church government. Neither Christ nor His Apostles practised excommunication. (Erastus manages to explain away 1 Corinthians v. 4-5.) He then points out that the practice of excommunication has led to innumerable evils, and declares that, in a Christian state all coercive authority (not excommunication) should be in the hands of the Prince, who is appointed by God to hold it.

The *Confirmatio* also deals merely with excommunication, and though it throws further light on Erastus's ideas on that subject, brings us no nearer to attributing Erastianism to him.

Erastus's attribution of all coercive power to the Prince, cannot be taken as an exaltation of his power to supremacy over religion. Erastus speaks of the 'Godly Prince' only. In a non-Christian State the authority of the magistrate is not to be regarded as above that of the Church. The fact also that Erastus does not allow the 'Godly Prince' to excommunicate shows that he attributes to him no absolute power over the Church.

When we pass on to the second question that we propounded at the outset of this chapter, and ask

what is meant by Erastianism, we find that the task of showing differences between what Erastus taught and the theories called by his name is very light, in that these theories move in quite a different atmosphere from that in which he penned his arguments.

Figgis declares in a footnote to the article in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, 'A great deal of so-called Erastianism is little more than the extravagant support of the one power that could carry through or maintain the particular religious views of the writer,' and he quotes an author who declares, 'Only this honour the Presbyterians give to their magistrates; they must be the executioners of their judgements to hang whom they condemn.'

When Erastianism is used in this loose sense, Erastus can be declared to have been an Erastian, in that he helped to produce what he regarded as reform through the agency of the State power. But when we seek for definitions of Erastianism, we find it impossible to bring them into direct relation with the thought of Erastus.

Selden furnishes a definition in his *Table Talk* when he asks the question, 'Whether is the Church or the Scripture the judge of religion?' and answers, 'In truth neither, but the State.'¹

After our examination of Erastus we find that his attitude to the State and the Church was subservient to what he held to be truth, and that he found truth especially by reference to Holy Scripture. So that the Erastianism of Selden cannot be attributed to him.

¹ David Irving's edition. Edinburgh, 1854. p. 86.

Wilberforce, in the foreword to his short *Sketch of the History of Erastianism*, says, 'By Erastianism I understand that system of opinions and that course of action which deprive the Church of Christ of independent existence and resolve it into a function of civil government.' But Erastus nowhere implies that the Church has no independent existence; in fact he stresses that there are times when it must assert its independence most strongly, that is when the State is not Christian; and even when the magistrate is Christian, he should act in consultation with the leaders of the Church. So that this definition seems wide of Erastus's thought.

The Bishop of Durham in the Introduction to his *National Church*, says, 'Erastianism may have two meanings. It may represent the belief that religion is a power at once dangerous and useful, and that it is well for a Government to promote and control some kind of religion amongst its people for the sake of mitigating discontent and restraining impulses, injurious to civil society.

'But it is also used to represent a very different conviction: that a nation is a sacred work and instrument of God, and that it belongs to God's designs for the well-being of mankind as revealed in history, that a people should express its faith in the Living God, through ordinances, confession and worship, and should exercise such control over its religious institutions as experience and history may prove to be beneficial.'

Erastianism, as taken in the first sense, is more akin to the thought of Machiavelli than of Erastus,

while the conception of a national Church is something, however fine, with which he is not concerned in his writings.

Perhaps the most useful definition of Erastianism for our purposes is that of Hobhouse in the appendix to his *Church and the World*. He puts forward a much wider definition. 'I have used the word Erastianism in the sense in which it has gained general currency, especially in England, that is, to denote a school of thought which denies the independence of the spiritual power, and justifies the intervention of the 'Magistrate' or civil power in matters of religion. It is plain that there may be many different degrees of Erastianism in this sense of the word, and not only men like Hobbes, Selden and Hoadly, but also such a writer as Hooker, may be rightly described as Erastian.'¹

Erastus would allow the intervention of the Magistrate in certain matters of religion, although he would allow him no supremacy over truth. But although the Erastianism of this more moderate definition may be attributed to Erastus this should not blind us to the difference between his thought and the systems which display it in its full-blown form.

We now face the last consideration which we put forward at the outset of the chapter. We have shown that the thought of Erastus moved within different limitations and in another atmosphere from the theories afterward denominated Erastian. How is it, then, that they became called by his name?

¹ *Church and the World in Idea and in History*, p. 392.

Perhaps it is in England that the term has been most used. Can we point to certain historical circumstances which account for the new content which the term received among us?

As we mentioned above, Erastus's works were published in London in the year 1589, at an important moment in the English disciplinarian controversy. It came down heavily on the side of the State in that debate. But when men read in Erastus that coercive power was to be solely in the hands of the magistrate, the impression produced would be different from that at Heidelberg.

At Heidelberg the Prince was pious, sympathetic to the Church, and anxious to be guided by it. But in England the magistracy was what Henry VIII and Elizabeth had made it. In their policy with regard to the Church, the primary motives had not been purely religious, but private and political. It was a magistracy which had declared in no indecisive terms through an Act of Supremacy, that it was the supreme power even where the Church was concerned. Hence the appeal by Erastus to Frederick III, became in England an appeal to a State with a tradition of Erastian policy behind it, and so his teaching had a new colour and significance among us.

Figgis declares that the extension of the term Erastians to mean not merely opponents of ex-communication, but upholders of the view that the magistrate could order religion as he liked, and command obedience, was due to the controversies at the time of the Westminster Assembly, when the Presbyterians attempted to convince Parliament

that 'Christ in the New Testament had instituted a Church Government distinct from the civil, to be exercised by the officers of the Church without civil commission.' He quotes an interesting extract from Dr. Baillie's journal at that time lamenting the deaf ear which Parliament turned to the appeals of the City of London in support of the Presbyterian Church Government. Parliament saw the threat to the newly-won political liberty which Englishmen had acquired, and felt that new presbyter was but old priest writ large.

They held really to the wise attitude of Erastus, that coercive power should be in the hands of the State alone. But men's thoughts were powerfully influenced at that time by the recent actions of Charles I, who had not scrupled to use the Church of England for his own political purposes, and Laud who had hoped to reform religion through State agency. Hence, when men supported the State, perhaps only in the spirit of Erastus, recent events gave that support another colour, and Erastianism came to mean control of religion by the State.

But the extension of the term, to mean the theory that religion is the creature of the State, is not merely accounted for by historical contingency. Although Erastus held no theory of that kind, and made no statements which point definitely in that direction, some of his leading ideas and arguments were such as could form links in a logical chain leading to such a position.

In his argument against excommunication he establishes the position, that nowhere does the Scripture give the Church a government distinct

from the civil power, and independence of it. Although Erastus does not stress this to the extent of declaring civil power supreme over the Church, he supplied an idea which provided a setting-out point for argument leading to this result.

His use of Holy Scripture showed men how easily it could be used to justify Erastianism. In the preface to his *Theses* he says, 'The consideration of the Jewish republic and Church did not a little help me. For then I thought with myself:—The Lord Himself doth testify, Deuteronomy iv., that His people hath statutes so just and wise, that the institutes of no people, that the sanctions of no republic, that no ordinance—however wisely constituted—were able to compare with them. Therefore it is necessary that the Church is most worthily and wisely ordered, which cometh nearest to the constitution of the Jewish Church. But in this, matters were so ordered by God, that we find not anywhere two diverse judicatories concerning manners, the one politic, and the other ecclesiastic. What then hindereth, that the Church now also, on whom the most merciful God hath bestowed a Christian magistrate, should be less content with one Government.'

There are passages in Hobbes' *Leviathan* which, with the exception of the phrase, 'Christian Magistrate,' have precisely the same ring. Erastus takes the Kingdom of Solomon as his example. Hobbes used the case of Solomon to justify his assertion of the supreme power of the magistracy over religion.

Erastus's stress on the unity of visible government

made his work useful for full-blown Erastians. He quotes Musculus in the introduction to the *Theses*. 'Nature denies two authentic Governments in the same people whereof one is not subject to the other.' Hence, although Erastus did not declare that the State was absolutely supreme himself, he made it a very narrow logical step to such a position in that he denied the supreme power of the Church government.

He strengthened the hands of Erastians, in that he declared that the Christian magistrate was appointed by God. Where the supreme power was regarded in a materialistic fashion, the same method of thought led directly to unscrupulous Erastianism.

Hence historical contingency and some logical affinity, explain how the theory known as Erastianism came to be called by his name.

Bonnard's summing up of this matter is, that Erastus expresses certain principles with a general bearing which justify the use made later of his name.

CHAPTER II

MOTIVES TO ERASTIANISM

OUR consideration of the thought and actions of Erastus shows that he had various motives in supporting the secular power. At the time of the discipline controversy he professed an intellectual one, namely that an examination of Holy Writ led to this conclusion, and so did reason since Nature denies 'two authentic Governments in one people whereof one is not subject to the other.' His support of the Magistracy when the Lutheran faith was proscribed was religious. It arose from the desire to see the true belief established by law. Another of his motives may be described as political. Freedom for himself and others of his type was only possible as long as coercive power belonged to the State alone and not to the authorities of the Church. Thus he illustrates three motives to an Erastian system of thought and action, an intellectual, a religious and a political.

The real consideration of Erastianism begins with the Reformation. It was at that Era that Church and State stood out clearly from each other and the problem of their relationship arose in an acute form. As Figgis points out¹ they were not thought of as two competing societies in the Middle Ages, and the quarrels between them are more accurately

¹ *Church and State*. Appendix I.

described as controversies between two sets of officials, the ecclesiastical and the lay, the Bishops and the justices, the Popes and the Kings, yet although the Middle Ages did not present the conditions for developed Erastianism, the thinkers and politicians of Reformation and later periods inherited many of their thoughts and experiences, and much of their politics. These were used in the formation of Erastian systems and the justification of Erastian policy.

Intellectual, religious, and political motives, are mixed in those who can be called Erastians. Still, various types of Erastianism can be described according to the motive which is dominant.

There is an Erastianism which rests upon philosophical speculation, and an Erastianism which arises from passionate religious conviction and seeks to compel men to the 'true' religion, and an Erastianism which represents a patriotic reaction against foreign interference, or the defence of civil rights against a tyrannical Church.

We will examine these motives in turn.

1.—THE INTELLECTUAL MOTIVE.

In Mediaeval times ecclesiastical thinkers, true to the Neoplatonic tradition which has always been a dominant element in Christian Theology, regarded the Universe as an ordered whole, and human life as a real if imperfect reflection of it. Hence mankind was regarded as essentially a unity; all its differences depended upon this unity as their source, and moved towards it as their end. The human race was mystically bound together in a universal

Church, and although it was the will of God that its unity should be divided into two orders of life, the spiritual and the temporal, this dualism could not be ultimate. In characteristic Neoplatonic fashion one order was regarded as finding its true meaning and purpose in another and higher order, which transcended it in spite of a mutual kinship. The spiritual order was sovereign, the temporal power received its dignity and sanction only through the mediation of the Church. Thus the Church became the true cosmopolis with the Pope at its head. This is the philosophical ground of the hierarchical theory which was developed from the time of Gregory VII onward. It sometimes led to disparaging language about the temporal power in the interest of the spiritual such as Neoplatonism used at times when speaking of matter from the standpoint of soul and spirit. It was even ascribed an unholy origin as something established after man's fall from innocence and as a consequence of his sin. It needed to be purified through obedience to the Church. It was looked upon as a subservient part of the ecclesiastical order and a means for ecclesiastical ends. The matter was stated in the metaphor of the two swords. The Pope possessed both the spiritual and the temporal sword, but he demised the use of the latter to the Emperor, who held it merely to wield at the instance and in the service of the Church. Thus the Pope was the Emperor's overlord. Because he possessed the spiritual sword it was still the Pope's privilege to supervise the offices of temporal princes. When he chose he could make use of the temporal sword. He

claimed jurisdiction over Emperors and Kings, and the right to protect peoples against tyranny and to depose rulers for their liberation. All these claims were put forward as the law of God.

Such theories were advanced by Alvarus Pelagius and Augustinus Triumphus during the struggle of John XXII with Lewis of Bavaria in the early fourteenth century. There were not wanting of course champions of the State against the absolute power assumed in ecclesiastical theory, but these rarely attempted to deduce a theory of the sovereignty of the State from the principle of unity. Sometimes, as with Ockham and Marsilius of Padua, they merely called to mind the older condition of things when the State was independent. They usually advanced the doctrine of two co-ordinate powers, each with a sphere appointed by God. They had to struggle for the mere concession of the independence of temporal law and the recognition that the authority of emperors and kings is derived immediately from God, and not immediately through the Vicar of God.

In practice there was a concession of the equal sovereignty of the Church and the Empire, but superior rank was allowed to the Church as the spiritual power.

It was from the Mediaeval Church that the Protestant States of the Reformation learnt what a claim to absolute power meant. Figgis expresses it thus in *From Gerson to Grotius*: 'The mediaeval mind conceived of its universal Church-State with power ultimately fixed in the spiritual head, bounded by no territorial frontier; the Pro-

testant mind places all ecclesiastical authority below the jurisdiction and subject to the control of the Godly Prince.’¹

When the claims of the Roman Church were rejected they were conceded by repulsion to the Christian Magistracy of the Protestant State.

Whether it were regarded as derived mediately or immediately from God, the notion of Monarchy was treated with great respect by mediaeval theorists, in spite of the language into which they were occasionally betrayed. They started here, as always, in theological and philosophical realms. God is the Monarch of the Universe and therefore of mankind in its spiritual and temporal aspects. All rulership therefore proceeds from God, the Supreme Monarch. It was self-evident to the mediaeval thinker that monarchy was the ideal form of government since every part should be like the whole. The Supreme Monarchy of the Empire was conceived as a Divine institution, and in every smaller body monarchy was regarded as normal.

The interest of the Reformers in the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, increased this reverence for monarchy. Old Testament religion bequeathed to Christian times two conceptions of great importance to the student of Erastianism; that of the Theocratic State, and the monarch chosen by God. Hobhouse says of Jewish religion and national life, ‘The Church and the nation were co-extensive and there was no separation between divine law and civil law.’² The Old Testament

¹ p. 71.

² *The Church and the World*, p. 11.

gives examples enough of divine right and absolute powers, and models lay to hand when the Protestant theorist sought to exalt the magistracy. Such thinkers were concerned, in the first instance, with secular independence of foreign or internal ecclesiastical domination. But once these examples were cited, and the doctrine of Divine right established it gave the monarch tremendous rights over the individual. Although derived from the Bible it was capable of most irreligious development. The same is true of the mediaeval principles of unity and the sacredness of monarchy. Useful as they were to Roman theorists they were very light in their loyalty and often reappear as traitors, serving Protestants and even Atheists.

Thus although it may seem a strange leap to take from mediaeval theorists and Protestant reformers to the irreligious Hobbes, it is still a logical one, since those intellectual ideas which played a part in their theory became absolutely dominant in him.

It is in his work, and not in the religious thinkers, that they are most effectively used and then as part of a materialistic philosophy. God is conceived as absolute power and human government as unalterably one. The Old Testament models are handled in the interest of such conceptions with results of a devastatingly Erastian character. 'The Leviathan,' says Figgis, 'exhibits true Erastianism in its most full-blown form.'¹ It is an Erastianism independent of religious purpose and political

¹ Article 'Erastus and Erastianism,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, v. ii., 1900.

expediency put forward as absolute truth deducible from the eternal order of things. The ideas of Unity and absolute Monarchy no longer serve particular ecclesiastical or secular systems, they expound the ultimate reality, and are advanced as a kind of 'four square Gospel,' solid and immutable. He did not evolve his theory with the purpose of bolstering a monarchical government. His doctrine is a vindication of the absolute right of whatever Government may be in power, of the Divine Right of Force. Here then the intellectual motive to Erastianism is absolutely dominant.

Hobbes held a mechanical view of the Universe and Man, and that all things were explicable by motion. All science for him resolved itself ultimately into mathematics, and all politics into physics; he was therefore a determinist. His account of the State was intended to be essentially scientific; deduced from the eternal elements in the human constitution and dependent on the unchanging laws of Nature.

The following is Hobbes' conception of God.¹ 'He that will attribute to God, nothing but what is warranted by naturall Reason, must either use such Negative Attributes, as *Infinite, Eternall, Incomprehensible*; or superlatives, as *Most High, Most Great*, and the like; or indefinite, as *Good, Just, Holy, Creator*; and in such sense, as if he meant not to declare what he is (for that were to circumscribe him within the limits of our Fancy), but how much wee admire him, and how ready we would be to

¹ *Leviathan*, Part 2, Chapter 31.

obey him; which is a signe of Humility, and of a Will to honour him as much as we can; For there is but one Name to signifie our Conception of his nature, and that is I AM: and but one Name of his Relation to us, and that is *God*; in which is contained Father, King and Lord.'

The chief attribute of God for Hobbes is His power. In the same Chapter of the *Leviathan* he declares: 'The Right of Nature, whereby God reigneth over men, and punisheth those that break his Lawes, is to be derived, not from his Creating them, as if he required obedience, as of Gratitude for his benefits; but from his *Irresistible Power*,' and further, 'Consequently it is from that Power, that the Kingdome over men, and the Right of afflicting men at his pleasure, belongeth Naturally to God Almighty; not as Creator, and Gracious; but as Omnipotent. And though Punishment be due for Sinne onely, because by that word is understood Affliction for Sinne; yet the Right of Afflicting, is not alwayes derived from men's Sinne, but from God's Power.'

Hobbes is therefore a fanatical believer in compulsion. He holds that power is the fundamental desire of the human breast, and that this desire can only be controlled by a power greater than all individuals, to which absolute authority can be ascribed. This power is the State.

Hobbes used the Scripture to explain and justify his view. He compares the monarch to Abraham, the one to whom alone God had spoken, and who, in consequence, possessed complete control over the bodies and religion of his subjects.

The above argument seems to be of the kind used to support the Divine Right of Kings, and indeed other statements of Hobbes have that appearance, as, for example, 'Since God speaketh not in these days to any man in his private interpretation of the Scriptures, nor by the interpretation of any power above . . . it remaineth that he speaketh by his vice-gods or lieutenants here on earth, that is to say, by sovereign kings, or such as have sovereign authority as well as they.' ¹

This should not blind us to the fact that Hobbes is essentially irreligious; his Monarch is a deification of absolute power.

Hobbes then proceeds to deal with every hindrance which can prevent the complete expression of this absolute power.

He denies the freedom of the individual conscience: 'Another doctrine repugnant to Civill Society is that whatsoever a man doeth against his conscience is Sinne: and it dependeth on the presumption of making himself judge of Good and Evill.' ²

He denies that natural law can limit a sovereign. Natural notions of Good and Evil are but theorems by which men guide their actions; they have no absolute value. 'These dictates of Reason, men use to call by the name of Lawes, but improperly, for they are but Conclusions or Theorems concerning what conduceth to the conservation and defence of themselves.'

There are in reality only two natural laws. 'The

¹ *De Corpore Politico*, c. VIII, 2.

² *Leviathan*, P. 2, Chap. 29.

First and Fundamental Law of Nature . . . is, *to seek Peace, and follow it. The Second the Summe of the Right of Nature is By all means we can to defend ourselves.*¹

He denies the validity of civil law, as against statute law. The former, he says, places the law above the Sovereign, and leads to a multiplicity of sovereign powers, for someone must enforce the law.

He points out that corporations can only exist by the concession of the State, and that they have no rights against it.²

The foregoing considerations lead to his view of the Church. The Church can make no claim to independence of the civil power. This would mean two authorities within the State but one authority must submit to the other. 'Now seeing it is manifest, that the Civill Power, and the Power of the Commonwealth is the same thing; and that Supremacy, and the Power of making Canons, and granting Faculties implyeth a Common-wealth; it followeth, that where one is Sovereign, another Supreme; where one can make Lawes, and another make Canons; there must needs be two Commonwealths, of one and the same Subjects; which is a Kingdome divided in itselfe, and cannot stand. For notwithstanding the insignificant distinction of *Temporall*, and *Ghostly*, they are still two Kingdomes, and every Subject is subject to two Masters. For seeing the *Ghostly* Power challengeth the Right to declare what is Law (Sinne being nothing but

¹ *Leviathan*, Chap. 14.

² *Ibid*, Chap. 22.

the transgression of the Law); and again, the Civill Power challenging to declare what is Law, every subject must obey two Masters, who both will have their Commands be observed as Law; which is impossible. Or, if it be but one Kingdome, either the *Civill*, which is the Power of the Commonwealth, must be subordinate to the *Ghostly*, and then there is no Sovereignty but the *Ghostly*; or the *Ghostly* must be subordinate to the *Temporall*, and then there is no *Supremacy* but the *Temporall*.¹

Hence Church authority is limited merely to the privilege of teaching, as was the apostles.²

Excommunication by the Church has no validity except for believers, who can avoid the offender. It cannot be maintained by the State. The Church is not to appeal to Scripture against the State, for even the New Testament cannot be quoted as an authority unless it tallies with the State Law.³

The Church has no power of jurisdiction. This belongs to the State alone. The uttermost privilege conceded to the Church is that of counsel and advice.

The Monarch can claim all the powers of the priesthood within the Church, and can perform the religious Sacraments and functions at will, in the same way as he must be allowed to lecture in a university if he wishes to do so.

When faced with the question: 'What ought a Christian to do when his Monarch commands him to act or speak contrary to the faith?' Hobbes

¹ *Leviathan*, Chap. 29.

² *Ibid*, Chap. 42.

³ *Ibid*, Chap. 42.

answers, contemptuously, by quoting the example of Naaman the Syrian, and saying that if the individual acts in obedience to the State against his own conscience, his action is not his own but the State's. When the example of the martyrs is cited, he answers that not everyone has a call to witness to the Gospel.

The Monarch might even establish the Roman Catholic faith. But in that case the Pope must submit to him as the supreme authority in his own dominions. 'Then the Pope is in that point subordinate, and exerciseth that charge in others Dominion, *jure civili*, in the right of the civil sovereign; and may therefore be discharged of that office when the Sovereign for the good of his subjects, shall think it necessary.' ¹

The following statement in Chapter 42 may be taken as a summary of Hobbes' attitude: 'From this consolidation of the Right Politique, and Ecclesiastique in Christian Sovereigns, it is evident, they will have all manner of Power over their Subjects, that can be given to man, for the government of men's externall actions, both in Policy, and Religion; and may make such Laws, as themselves shall judge fittest, for the government of their own Subjects, both as they are the Common-wealth, and as they are the Church: for both State and Church are the same men.'

It is not necessary to spend time on a criticism of Hobbes. The elucidation of his thought is itself a criticism. We mention only the following points.

It is a system of political thought, built by the

¹ *Leviathan*, Chap. 42.

simple process of closing the eyes to certain facts. Human nature is not what he described, nor can a polity be based on his so-called laws of nature, which are in reality Hobbes' personal cowardice elevated into rules of political thought.

Neither could the absolute power, of which Hobbes speaks, be achieved without reference to the will of the people. It is true that Might may be Right for a time, but ultimately, only Right is Might. This was Spinoza's criticism of Hobbes.

Hobbes' attitude is not so much a solution of the problem of the relation of Church and State, as a complete ignoring of it. For a man with Hobbes' conception of the Church there could be no problem.

This full-blown Erastianism could never be realized in fact, as it is a travesty of human nature, of the Church, and also the State. Such a complete domination as Hobbes advocates could not be practised by any State. It is a philosophical nightmare.

2.—THE RELIGIOUS MOTIVE.

The Christian consciousness has been interested in every age not merely in the contemplation of the eternal kingdom of God, but in its realization here and now in this world. Thus the Church is intricately related to the things of the world, with the impulse to control and possess them in the interest of the higher purpose. But this involves a certain compromise with its methods and ideals, and the policy of the Church is shaped by world conditions and thoughts as well as by the spiritual purpose which is the energizing principle. The Church

sought from the earliest to change the whole life of mankind and this inevitably involved a relationship to the State. But after the primitive glow of loving evangelical activity had passed away, this change was too easily conceived in terms of thoughts and methods already existing in the State, and their radical difference from Christian principle too slowly comprehended. It eventually came to be understood as obtaining sufficient power in the State to compel obedience to the Church.

The hostile attitude of the Roman Empire to the Church in the early centuries was largely responsible for this. In the face of persecution Christianity became highly organized and deeply conscious of its unity. A struggle between two world organizations ensued which could only end in one submitting to the other. The superior vitality of the Christian Church triumphed. When Constantine became Emperor her authority was recognized, and the only course open to the representative of the State was to conciliate and to be useful to her.

Christians hailed his ascension as the providence of God. To support the State in Constantine was to secure the establishment and advance of the Church. Disputed matters were referred to him because his decisions were for her benefit. It was good to exalt the secular power when that power exalted the Church. So that imperial enactments, for the granting of further secular power to the Church, were regarded as so many advances of the Kingdom of God.

The same policy of generous benefaction to the Church characterized the later Emperors with the

exception of Julian, whose reign did not affect the general course of events. The Church grew richer and more powerful by adopting the methods with which the State could assist her. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the use of the imperial sword for world-evangelization during the Dark Ages. The evangelical parable 'Compel them to come in,' took on a sinister meaning as all peoples were forced to bow at the Church's feet.

After the fourth century the Church was committed to the use of worldly power for aggrandizement. With the decline of the Western Empire the Western Church inherited its form and authority. Even within the Church, reform was sought not by spiritual means but by the concentration of power in the hands of the Papacy; this was the aim of the great Popes from the eleventh century onward. The absence of the Emperor from Rome made this easier. In the East, however, was illustrated the danger of this use of the secular power to the Church; constant interference by the Emperor in ecclesiastical affairs plunged the Eastern Church deeper and deeper into an Erastian servitude.¹ Before the Reformation then, men were

¹ERASTIANISM IN THE EASTERN CHURCH.—Circumstances and history in the East merged Church and State into each other. St. Paul chose the provincial capitals as strategic points in the conquest of the world for Christ. Thus as Christianity prospered country congregations looked to the Bishop of the City as their head, and the administrative unit was the same for Church and State. The long struggle of the Patriarchs of Constantinople with Alexandria made them lean more and more on the support of the Emperor. The Church looked to the Emperor for salvation from heretic and pagan, through legal enactments. The fact that Emperor and Patriarch lived in the same place led to the Emperor's constant oversight in Church affairs. Thus he became regarded

familiar with the spectacle of a great institution using the secular power to establish itself and to suppress all other forms of religion. Thus it was natural for the Reforming sects to assert themselves by the same methods. The justice of the use of compulsion was never questioned. To obtain control of the State in the interest of religious reform was one of their first impulses. The religious motive produced Erastian changes of religion at that time, but this policy often led to the same results, as were illustrated in the fate of the Eastern Church.

The position of Luther is paradoxical. He stood forth as the champion of faith against a great secularized institution, and yet his doctrines in their own way strengthened those tendencies which make for the secularization of religion. The teaching and actions of the prophet of religious freedom became useful to those in whose interest it was to limit it.

Machiavelli remarks in the *Prince* that every armed prophet is victorious, but that every unarmed prophet is martyred. Luther had no intention of being an armed prophet but he had equally no intention of being martyred. He met Rome with as the Defender of the Faith. He alone could summon a Church Council. His lay commissioners presided at them and their conclusions had no force without his consent. In time the Emperor alone defined the Church's dogma by imperial edict. He could enforce his will by the deposition of a recalcitrant Patriarch. He was the Priest-King without whose command and will nothing should happen in the Church. Thus the Christian Church and the Christian Empire were the same. It was the divine function of the Emperor to represent this whole in his person. He had, of course, to be orthodox in Faith and Morals. The Eastern ideal was expressed in Justinian's *One State, One Law, One Church*.

as subtle a policy as she sought to entrap him. He took no step without adequate guarantees for his safety. It was only through the protection of German princes, such as the Elector Frederick of Wartburg, that he was able to withstand.

In the first glow of religious enthusiasm, however, he could speak insultingly enough of those who held worldly authority.

He held that the Church was independent. He declared that all power resides in the hands of the congregation, or body of believers—the Church collective. In their hands are the keys or the right to exercise Church discipline, the Sacraments and all the powers of government. The clergy are commissioned by the people to perform offices which belong to all in common, but which all cannot discharge. The Churches have the power to elect and ordain their ministers for it is to the Churches that the command is addressed, to preach the gospel.

The Church is endued with the right to govern itself; the right of excommunication belongs not to a body of ecclesiastics, but to the congregation and its chosen pastors.

But the double pressure of the development of what was inherent in his own thought and that of outward circumstance made Luther influence the Church's future in precisely the opposite direction, namely, in the exaltation of the secular power. Several of the principles which he laid down pointed in that direction, as did also the main emphasis of his thought in *Concerning Secular Authority* (1523). In spite of some contemptuous language, he establishes the position that the lay power is of

God, bad as it is at times. The Prince has power over the bodies of his subjects. Subjects have no rights against a wicked monarch, their privilege is to suffer. 'If on this account he takes thy possessions and punishes such disobedience; thou art blessed, and shouldst thank God that thou art worthy to suffer for the sake of the Divine Word.'¹ This sentiment received still more powerful expression later in his first address to the Peasants. 'A child can understand that the Christian privilege is not to struggle against injustice nor to lay hold on the sword, nor to defend oneself, nor to revenge oneself, but to give up body and possessions and let him despoil who will; we have sufficient in our Lord who will not forsake us as He has promised. To suffer, to suffer; the Cross, the Cross, that is the privilege of the Christian, that and nothing else.'² Thus he advocates passive obedience of the most extreme kind. He was also very conscious that to govern is to compromise with human sinfulness. He seems to imply that a prince must sometimes act unscrupulously, 'he must wink at some things and bide his time.'³ He quotes David's instructions to

¹ 'Nimt er dir darüber dein Gut und straft solchen Ungehorsam: selig bist du und danke Gott, dass du würdig bist, um gottlichen Wortes willen zu leiden.' Works, Vol. 7, p. 256. (1892.)

² Griefft ein Kind wohl, dass christlich Recht sei, nicht sich sträuben wider Unrecht; nicht, zum Schwert greifen; nicht, sich wehren; nicht, sich rächen, sondern dahingeben Leib und Gut, dass er raube, wer da raubet; wir haben doch genug an unserem Herrn, der uns nicht lassen wird, wie er verheissen hat. Leiden, Leiden, Kreuz, Kreuz, ist der Christenrecht, das und kein anderes. Mundt. II. 93. Figgis, *From Gerson to Grotius*, p. 273.

³ 'Wer nicht kann durch die Finger sehen, der kann nicht regieren.'

murder Joab which David himself had not been able to do as an example. (Quite Machiavellian here!) Such sayings were easily used in the interest of crude despotism, and would be most acceptable to an irreligious despot.

Not only could certain of his principles be used in the exaltation of the secular, but what was best in Luther's thought made him favour the sanctity of the lay power, as against the ecclesiastical.

His religious emphasis tended in that direction.

One of his great contributions to religion was a conviction of the sanctity of common human life and activity. He never wearied of mocking at the monks. For the monastic ideal of the Middle Ages, Luther substituted the conception of the Christian family and the Christian community. 'The true monastery is the State,' said Erasmus. It was the spirit which produced this remark which inspired Luther. The ideal of the perfect commonwealth which men conceived to be realizable in this world in a monastic seclusion, was now the pattern by which men's ordinary affairs were to be ruled. So that civil power was for Luther essentially holy; it was formed for the purpose of fulfilling one great object of Christ's religion—the love of man towards his neighbour, which again is dependent on his love towards God.

Figgis sums up the matter when he says, 'What Luther did in the world of Politics, was to transfer to the temporal sovereign the halo of sanctity that had hitherto been merely the privilege of the ecclesiastical.'¹

¹ *From Gerson to Grotius*, p. 93.

But the pressure of circumstances also forced Luther to attribute more and more authority to the State. He became convinced that the Germans were too turbulent to have self-government in ecclesiastical affairs, and the people must conform to the will of the Princes in the matter. They were the natural leaders since they were the patrons and the most important members of the Church. It was held that it belonged to the civil power to maintain order, by the regulation even of the externals of worship. The influence of the Peasants' War, and the strife with Anabaptists, led Luther to give the Prince a still higher authority in religious matters. It is true that Luther is at times positive in his assertion that the jurisdiction of the civic rulers is restricted to temporal affairs, to protection of life and property, as in the Augsburg confession. Yet, as special circumstances arose, Luther and Melancthon attributed to the State a much greater power in matters of religion; for example, to compel villages and cities to have schools and preachers. They held that the magistrate should take cognizance of offences against the first, as well as the second table of the law. He should punish blasphemy, and hence also abolish the Mass. Luther justified such State interference, by the example of Hezekiah breaking the serpent of Brass, and that of Constantine.¹

Thus the practical outcome of Luther's work was to exalt the Prince as the supreme power in ecclesiastical affairs and whatever engagements he might be under to consult the clergy as to doctrine

¹ Cf. G. P. Fisher, *Reformation*, 1906, Chap. XIV.

and administration, took a subsidiary place beside that recognition. So the tendency of the Monarch was to encroach more and more upon the prerogatives of the Church. Within his own territory he reigned supreme over religion. The principle *cuius regio, eius religio* was pushed to its full consequences. 'This maxim,' says Pollard, 'is as fatal to true religion as it is to freedom of conscience. It is the creed of Erastian despotism, the formula in which German territorial Princes expressed the fact that they had mastered the Church as well as the State.'¹ So that Luther in using the State for the Reform of the Church produced a condition in which the Church depended completely on the State.

When England was evangelized in Anglo-Saxon times the process was through the monarch downwards to the people. Hence the secular power had always privileges with regard to ecclesiastical affairs. In spite of the increased independence of the Church through the closer unity with Rome, following on the Norman Conquest, the monarchs were loath to relinquish them. Struggles between the monarch and the Church were adjusted by various compromises; but the unpopularity of the Papacy in England during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries concentrated the power more and more in the hands of the former. Henry VIII was not moved by any religious purpose in severing the connexion with Rome. But upon his death the extreme Protestants and the Catholics intrigued in turn to obtain control of the State machinery until

¹ Quoted by Hobhouse, *Church and the World*, p. 225.

the adjustment under Elizabeth. Erastian changes of religion from Protestant to Catholic and Catholic to Protestant took place.

When Protestantism was securely established, a struggle developed between the High Anglican and the Presbyterian forms of religion. Archbishop Laud is an interesting example of the religious motive to Erastian methods of reformation. The dominating purpose of his career was to make himself more and more necessary to the monarch until at last he had attained a position of sufficient power to establish the High Church religion throughout the realm by means of State action. His tragedy was that he only reached that position when the forces ranged against him had become unmanageable. His loyal supporter, Strafford, worked for the enrichment of the English Church in Ireland, and provided perhaps the most characteristic illustration of Erastian religious reformation; in that he bullied the Irish Convocation which had just rejected the English Articles and confirmed their own Calvinistic Lambeth Articles as their standard of Faith under Anathema, into adopting the former. 'The English Articles were commanded to be put again, yes or no, to Convocation; no deliberation, not a word allowed, simply yes or no,'¹ and the matter was decided by sheer force. But Laud's attempt to reform the Church with the help of the State ended by making the Church a tool in the hands of a blundering monarch. W. H. Hutton tells us in his book on William Laud: 'He started upon his work with the full support of the Crown. Erastian

¹ Mozley, *Essays*, Volume I, p. 34.

he was not, for he desired that the State should serve, and not command the Church. But the distinction in principle was not easy to observe in practice. . . . Charles I and Laud worked together, and their wiser measures suffered from association with political blunders.' Again, 'the Church lost more than it gained by the patronizing interference of the State.' The policy led to the upheaval of the Civil War which was in reality a war between two religions.

The same phenomenon meets us again in the Act of Uniformity of 1662 which marked the end of the struggle between the High Church and Presbyterian Parties within the Church of England. Both had manoeuvred for the control of the State but the reaction after the Puritan dictatorship had placed the former in the dominant position. It is interesting to note, however, that they worked through the Ministers and Parliament rather than the King, whose claim to a dispensing power was jealously watched. Parliament, elected in the Royalist reaction, passed the measure without debate although they declared their right to debate it. This working through Parliament had its part in changing the character of English Erastianism from a monarchical to a democratic type. It entangled the religious with political issues such as the duty of non-resistance and the repudiation of the Solemn League and Covenant. The policy which led to 1662, however necessary it was to preserve the integrity of the Church of England, ultimately greatly strengthened other forms of religion in the land. After the Toleration Act the

Church of England was a Church among other recognized forms of religion and not the only legal religion.

In this sketch of the religious motives to Erastianism, it is seen that the principle of uniformity is always taken for granted; and it is assumed that the complete truth is in the possession of one institution only. The justice of compulsion is never called in question. Persecution is the rule. Finally, the attempt to use the State involves the entanglement of the Church in the State machinery and hence often ends in the control of the Church by the secular power.

The development of Pietism in Germany is interesting as fostering Erastianism, not through any desire of speedy religious reform through the State, but by precisely the opposite tendency of indifference to the externals of religion. The names, Philip Joseph Spener (born 1635) and Christian Thomasius (born 1655) are associated with each other. From entirely different standpoints they both tended to strengthen Erastian influences in Germany. The former was the leader of the Pietistic movement; and the latter was celebrated for his writings on natural law. His principles were that the consent of the clergy was not required for the settlement of Church matters which must be decided exclusively by the temporal power. This became the prevalent theory in Germany and its alliance with Pietism was cemented when Thomasius was appointed to the newly-founded Pietist University of Halle. Pietism was a form of religion which paid little attention to externals and doctrine,

and was quite content to leave them in the hands of the civil power. So that Erastianism in Germany was strengthened by religion concentrating on personal piety and ascribing little importance to Church government.

3.—THE POLITICAL MOTIVE.

We have seen that mediaeval theorists often tended to regard the State as inherently evil when it was contrasted with the spiritual kingdom of the Church. With the Renaissance came a new emphasis on the reality and importance of this present world. In Machiavelli both these thoughts were taken absolutely seriously and all religious ideas which might qualify them were abandoned. In political life considerations of good and evil had to be put aside and the only practical politician was he who realized this. Machiavelli was by nature a heathen and he did his political thinking untrammelled by any Christian prejudice. Although his name has been turned by succeeding generations into an adjective of approbrium, there was a certain nobility in his character. His stirring appeal to Prince Lorenzo de Medici to liberate Italy from the foreign yoke at the end of *Il Principe* testifies at once to his genuine patriotism and his heroic personal ambition. These were the dominating motives which produced his amoral doctrine of political practice. That doctrine is not systematically stated. *Il Principe* was a book called forth by particular circumstances and cannot be regarded as expressing its author's deepest beliefs on all the subjects with which it deals. The *Discorsi* seem

rather to experiment in what might be done than to advocate a clear-cut course of action. Still, its main features are easy to descry. Political expediency is the dominating consideration. Machiavelli was no mere theorist, he gives advice on the basis of his personal observation of prominent political personalities while in the service of Florence. His opinions are reinforced by the study of the Greeks and Romans, not in their theory, but in the lives of the heroes of antiquity. Thus he sees life as a struggle between the man who possesses courage and will (*virtu*) and political circumstances (*fortuna*). As those circumstances have no scruples in regard to him, so he needs no conscience in his dealings with them. Necessity is the controller of his actions and the last master to whom he must bow. He is justified in the use of any means at his disposal, as a man surrounded by wild beasts would be in laying about him with the nearest weapon to hand. Whatever establishes and advances him is good. Thus, although Machiavelli nowhere deals with the relation of Church and State as such, his teaching has implications for our subject. Religion is for him mere superstition. It is another tool to be used by the adroit, and a most powerful one since it has a terrific sway over men. He assumes that the monarch will in reality have no religion. Thus his pragmatism brings him to the same place as the speculation of Hobbes. For the latter, religion was the particular superstition which was supported by the State. In both we have the same travesty of human nature reached in different ways. Of the two Machiavelli

is perhaps to be preferred, since his naturalistic ethic is built on courage and not cowardice as in Hobbes. It is difficult to tell how far his influence told in the relations between monarch and Church within particular States, since those who thought him most worthy of imitation were most zealous in his repudiation. His influence told most (as Figgis shows)¹ in international relations where law was less acknowledged and jungle methods seemed less criminal. His treatment of religion might have been possible to an intellectual in heathen times dealing with religions with little or no spiritual and moral content, but it was impossible of application to a Church which believes itself in possession of the Way, the Truth and the Life. Still, the term Erastian became fearsome because it was supposed to hold Machiavellian possibilities.

The Reformation in England had a political and patriotic aspect. No great doctrinal issue was at stake in Henry VIII's breach with Rome. It was produced by the need of a single unified control within the State. He did not act in the interest of the liberation of the Church. He neither freed an oppressed Church nor subjugated a Free Church, the freedom of the English Church had long since shrunk to a shadow; she was controlled on the one hand by the King and on the other by the Pope. It was a question as to which authority was to be supreme. The growth of national sentiment in England strengthened the power of the Monarch and the antipathy to the Pope, especially when he was a Frenchman. The people were tired of sending

¹ *From Gerson to Grotius*, Chap. III.

their money to enrich the Papal coffers. They endured the new despotism without rebellion for they felt the need of order; they were conscious that the very existence of the Commonwealth was bound up with submission to authority. Danger from foreign enemies was imminent and the common-sense of the upper classes, who at that time composed the nation, supported the despotism. Their duty to God was to submit to the King, and this not merely on Scriptural authority but also because they felt that the magistracy was so urgently needed that it must be true. Thus the Erastian change in the Church was endured without upheaval.

Cranmer, as Smyth points out,¹ died for the principle of the independence of the English crown against the Pope. Although Queen Mary commanded him to obey the Pope, he died for the independence of the English crown in spite of her. As Smyth puts it he died for the Royal supremacy, in defiance of the crown. He said in the course of his examination before his Judge, 'There is no subject but to a King. I am a subject, I owe my fidelity to the Crown. The Pope is contrary to the Crown. I cannot obey both; for no man can serve two masters at once . . . the King is head in his own realm; but the Pope claims all bishops, priests, curates, &c., so the Pope in every realm hath a realm. Christ biddeth us to obey the King.'

Thus in England the need of the monarch for political independence and the growing national

¹ *Cranmer and the Reformation*, p. 29f.

sentiment brought an Erastian condition of dependence of the Church on the State.

But Erastianism was not merely supported in the interest of monarchical independence, it was often also a bulwark for the individual or the constitution. The protagonists in the struggle against the attempt to legalize the Presbyterian Church discipline were lawyers who saw that civil liberty was threatened. They were termed Erastians by their opponents, for keeping the coercive power in the hands of the State. They saw that new presbyter was but old priest writ large. After the seventeenth century English Erastianism changed in character, from a monarchical to a constitutional type, as the form of government altered. It was, however, in Germany that this condition of things was first justified by theory. Pfaff, the learned Chancellor of Tübingen, held that the monarch's right to interfere in Church matters rested not on divine or hereditary right but on the free concession of the people; the power lay in them and the monarch was allowed by them to act on their behalf. Thus, the power was neither in the Church nor the Crown, but in the body of the people. It rested in the last resort on the natural right of individual judgement. His system thus asserted Church authority to rest upon 'the mutual consent of men, when they entered into relations with one another as members of the same nation.' The power formerly vested in the sovereign, was now held in common by the King and the estates of the Realm, and in practice was exercised by the minister who had the confidence of the people's representatives.

While the determination of Church matters rested nominally with the Sovereign it depended really on the popular opinion of the day. Thomas Arnold's thought was parallel. In his Church-State he would include all those of whatever denomination who professed belief in Christ. It was a theory very acceptable to those who were debarred from certain political privileges because they were not members of the State Church. It fitted in with the politics of the time which seemed bent on destroying privilege wherever it existed. State control of the Church was a means of extending political liberty.

CHAPTER III

THE PROBLEM OF ERASTIANISM

THE problem of Erastianism is that of the relation of Church and State. In what way is that relation to be conceived? From the Church's standpoint this question is part of a more inclusive and fundamental problem, namely: how is the Kingdom of God to be realized in the world? Every treatment of such a question is of necessity unsatisfactory, not only on account of the vague and unwieldy nature of the conceptions involved, but also because it can only be answered in concrete situations of life, and that by living and not merely by the logical analysis of ideas.

At the root of every Erastian development in the centuries following the Reformation there lay an assumption of divine and absolute authority on the part of some human thought-system or institution. It was assumed that authority lay without rather than within the human spirit, and that it worked from above downwards. Philosophical and theological systems were put forward as final truth to which every mind was subservient. Churches claimed unqualified obedience not merely for the gospel but also for all they asserted as institutions. Monarchs who asserted that they ruled by divine right claimed to have disposal not only of their subjects' bodies but also of their consciences. When

these authorities conflicted an impasse was reached in which the stronger party continued to persecute while the weaker struggled and suffered. It was impossible to find a way through such situations simply because its discovery involved factors which were precluded by the mental attitude of those concerned.

Experience proved the futility of such a course. Ideas were traitors which were just as ready to serve the heretic as the orthodox. The claims of the Roman Church led to her losing half Europe. Persecutions on behalf of the Established Church in Protestant countries often ended by strengthening the sects and almost reducing the State Church to one of them. Kings who assumed the halo of divine prerogative displayed human weakness and greed. Truer and broader ideas gained ground.

The problem of Erastianism in its old form of a relationship between a Church and a monarch, each claiming absolute and divine authority, was never solved, life passed beyond it. It was transcended by a broader knowledge and a deeper sympathy. Scientific research showed the universe to be far larger and more wonderful than the ancient philosophies and the Biblical outlook had ever conceived. Men who derived such rich results from empirical study of nature began to breathe a freer intellectual atmosphere than a narrow logic had provided. Critical study of the Bible discovered that interpretations of certain texts which had been pressed into the service of political theory were quite unwarranted. The study of archaeology and ancient Eastern literature threw a totally different

light on the Bible and Jewish customs of government ceased to be the norm of all government. The examples of Moses and Solomon ceased to carry weight, and could no longer be appealed to as final. The old systems became foreign and obsolete and men's ideas moved in a new thought-world, in which authorities had to produce their credentials.

In this new atmosphere it was easier to be tolerant, and with the growth of toleration the old situation was superseded. Toleration was fostered by a double tendency—the rather irreligious speculation of the eighteenth century with its assumption that the dogmas of revealed religion were less important than the maxims of reason, and a growth in the conscience of all good men, who had become disgusted with bitter religious hatreds. The religious wars in England and France brought a reaction. It was in North America that religious freedom was first advocated as a political principle. Roger Williams, in the colony of Providence in 1636, declared that no compulsion should be used in matters of belief. Lord Baltimore in Maryland in 1649 followed this example and required from members of the State only a confession of belief in Christ. William Penn in Pennsylvania in 1682 required only a belief in one God, the Creator and the Ruler of the Universe. It took more than a century for the new principle to be recognized. The second half of the eighteenth century brought progress. Frederick the Great of Prussia was the first to practise it energetically in Germany, and heresy was struck out of the list of punishable crimes within his dominions. He declared that in

the Prussian State a man might be happy after his own fashion.

When compulsion had gone the atmosphere of the problem altered, and all kinds of adjustments between Churches and the State became possible once the parties concerned were no longer committed to a particular theory of authority.

The simplicity of the old form of the problem has passed away. Two factors unite to give it complexity. First, there has been a transition from a monarchic to a democratic form of government, in consequence of which the State is no longer represented by a King regarded by the Church as possessing an inherent divine right to control her affairs. Modern Governments cannot be regarded as of any particular religious colour, or pledged in any way to specific religious interests. In England the direct interference of the monarch in the affairs of the Church of England largely disappeared after 1689. Parliament became the heir of the Royal Supremacy. This did not mean an increase in the Church's control of her own affairs in consequence of the laity obtaining more power. The changes which toleration produced led to a precisely opposite result and the modern Parliament cannot be regarded as a representation of the laity of the Church of England, or indeed of any Church. The issues on which they were elected were not specifically religious. Thus the control of Church affairs passed into the hands of a State that was often apathetic and indifferent. The second factor is that since the Toleration Act the State has no longer to do merely with one established form of

religion, but finds itself in some degree of relationship with every Church represented within it. No Church can claim to be independent of the State, its relation is none the less real for seeming to be indirect. The State is no longer committed to the advancement of one form of religion. It has a duty to each that is tolerated; and each individual Church has a duty to it.

The word State can no longer be taken to mean the Monarch. Nor is it merely the State officials, since they are liable to be altered at any time in a democratic country. Nor yet can it be taken to mean simply the aggregate of individuals composing it, for the State is a community and a common life beyond that of the individuals within it. The State is probably best defined as the 'supreme corporation.' Thus as Figgis has expressed it: 'The real problem is the relation of smaller communities to that "*communitas communitatum*" we call the State, and whether they have an existence of their own, or are the creatures of the Sovereign.'¹ The relation of the State to religious bodies is a part of a larger problem, namely of its attitude to all corporations within itself. From the point of view of each Church the question is this: 'How are we to give free expression to our corporate religious life within the limits that the State imposes?' We have said that in its older form the Erastian problem was never solved. There is a sense in which in its modern form it can never be completely solved. Both the State and the Churches within it are living bodies, and changes

¹ *Churches and the Modern State.* Lecture I.

of thought and policy in the one or the other are liable to reopen the problem at any time in a new form. Even where the relationship between Church and State has been adjusted according to principles which are declared mutually satisfactory, there is always a possibility of friction in minor matters since life progresses more quickly than laws can be passed to control it.

In order that the Churches may find a satisfactory conception of their relation to the State it is necessary to ask two questions. Firstly, what is the function of the Church in the world? And secondly, in the light of that function, how shall the Church require that the State should conceive of her?

What does the Church conceive herself to be in the world? In the first place she is a divine creation. This does not mean that every Church regards the particular order of its institution as specifically ordained by God. But it does mean that the Church is not merely an association of people united for a particular purpose. The Church came into being by the will of God and the reason for its existence lies beyond the thoughts and desires of its members. The Roman Church makes this claim for her whole dogmatic and ecclesiastical structure. Every Church claims it for the life and truth which is within her. The Living Christ and the eternal power of the truth of salvation make the Church a Church. The members of a physical body do not become united by common purpose or a mutual understanding, they derive their worth and power from the living soul whose expression they are.

Whatever theory a Church may have of herself, she at least makes this claim to be part of the body of Christ. Her life and her purpose lie beyond herself in God.

The Church turns to God rather than to man, to things invisible rather than to this present world. She exists primarily for the worship of God and for communion with Him. The Church's first purpose is essentially other-worldly. Nevertheless she has her task in the world—the realization of the Kingdom of God in this earthly sphere. But the Kingdom is far beyond being merely an affair of this world. Within it, souls are in eternal relationship of love and joy with God. Thus the Church can never commit herself entirely to any human community or purpose however laudable they may be. She looks beyond the nation to mankind, and beyond mankind to the Kingdom of God.

For the advancement of this Kingdom there are in reality no other means save those by which Christ did His work in His earthly life. They are holiness, sacrifice and service. In saying this we condemn the Churches for they have almost all been guilty of attempting to realize it by other methods. As Dr. Temple points out, Christ faced and overcame at the outset of His ministry those temptations into which institutions bearing His name fell so easily in later centuries.¹ The three temptations in the wilderness are three forms of one temptation: to bring in the Kingdom by some form of compulsion, by reducing men to economic dependence upon Him

¹ *Church and Nation*, Chap. I.

through satisfying their crying material needs, or by bringing them into political subjection by becoming an earthly conqueror, or by overwhelming them with the sight of magical wonders. Christ chose rather to appeal to man's spiritual nature, to follow the way of love and service. After He had rejected the temptations His feet were in the way that led to the Cross. But after the fourth century the Church chose rather to gain ascendancy over men's spirits by political or spiritual compulsion, and the error that because the Church had a divine mission in the world she was therefore to be or to control the supreme temporal power, was the general assumption. It has taken centuries of strife to convince us of the falsity of this.

Thus within the Church are created saints who in holiness of spirit seek to win men to God by sacrificial service. This does not mean that the Church is in consequence indifferent to the State. The opposite is the case. The Church is older than the State, it was under the tuition of the Church and with her assistance that the English State took form, and no one can measure the influence of the modern Churches on the State to-day although that influence is more indirect.

It follows that if the above is the true work of the Church, the Church must insist that the State conceive of her in such a way as not to hinder that end. The State must acknowledge that function loyally in the same way as the Church has always recognized the part which the State has in the Divine Providence. But often the theories according to which the Churches are treated by the

State are far from recognizing their uniqueness and living quality.

In such theories the Supremacy of the State is either blatantly asserted or tacitly assumed. Hegel's language about the God-State approached that of religious exaltation. The Church cannot join its worshippers since she holds up a Name to which every knee must bow. But sometimes claims just as far-reaching for the State are taken for granted in the administration of the law when a Church issue is at stake. Thus the Church must watch not only the general theory but the line of action taken by the State in any practical situation. Instances are numerous in which Church law and the rights of the Church as a living body are over-ridden by the State. In France the State has had a marked anti-clerical bias. In Germany Bismarck's attempts to drill the Churches are well known. Examples in this country are not marked perhaps by the same political cynicism, but the injustice done was not the less real. To mention only two. In 1857 Parliament made it possible for married persons to obtain, under certain conditions divorce *a vinculo*, legalized the remarriage of divorced persons, and provided for such remarriage according to the rites of the Church of England, although the Church of England itself has never varied from its ancient refusal to admit the possibility of divorce.¹

Then there is the famous case of the Free Church of Scotland Appeals. A strong party in the Free Kirk which had issued from the Disruption of 1843,

¹Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Church and State, 1917. p. 24.

had laboured under the leadership of Principal Rainy, to promote union with the older body, the United Presbyterians. This Union, which was ultimately effected, was resisted by the body within the Free Kirk known as the Wee Frees. The most important of their contentions were, that the party which desired union were giving a loose interpretation to the formularies of the Free Kirk, and that to desert the rigid Calvinistic doctrines meant that the identity of the Free Kirk in the New United Free would not be maintained; and that when the Free Kirk was formed, Chalmers and his party, while objecting to certain abuses in the Established Church of Scotland, had also declared themselves in favour of establishment. The possibility of re-establishment was now abandoned through the union with the United Presbyterians.

These contentions were held valid by the House of Lords. The Act by which Union had been carried was condemned as *ultra vires*, and all the property of the Free Kirk was adjudged to belong to the Wee Frees. This, however, produced such wide discontent in Scotland that an Act of Parliament was passed setting up a body of Commissioners, with power to apportion the property equitably between the disputing sections, and without regard to the decision of the Lords.

In both these cases the course taken by the State affected the dogmatic and ethical teaching of the Church. In the first case the teaching of the Church on an ethical question was ignored, in the second the State became the judge as to whether a Church could develop beyond its original stand-

point in creed and policy. The case of the Free Church of Scotland shows that a non-established Church is in equal danger of State mishandling as the State Church itself. In both cases the assumption was made that the law of the land is supreme, that the State Church is bound by it, and that the non-established Church can only develop in accordance with its decision. Both cases show that relations between Church and State need to be conceived in something more than the terms of legal enactments.

As the ideal relationship is summed up in the phrase 'a Free Church in a Free State,' a legal theory is required with regard to Church affairs which will do justice to the Church's living quality.

A Church is a living community which often far transcends in its progress what was legislated for it in the past, and may then find itself fettered by legislation once designed for its benefit. If justice is to be done to the Churches some mode of treatment must be evolved other than one which clings to literal interpretation of past legislation.

The German 'Genossenschaftstheorie,' associated with the massive work of Otto Gierke, prepares the way for such a treatment.¹

The corporation-theory is concerned with the phrase 'persona ficta,' which was first used in mediaeval ecclesiastical courts. It was the famous jurist who afterwards became Pope Innocent IV in 1243, who first used this term. He proclaimed that the Universitas could commit neither sin nor delict.

¹ See Maitland's Introduction to Otto Gierke's *Political Theories of the Middle Ages*.

But the doctrine that the Corporation is only a 'persona ficta' was eagerly adopted by the Italian lawyers, who found it a useful concept for asserting the absolute power of the State.

The legal doctrine of 'persona ficta' was as follows: besides men or natural persons the law knows as subjects of proprietary rights, certain fictitious, artificial, or juristic persons; and as one species of this class, it knows the corporation. It is capable of proprietary rights, but it is incapable of knowing, intending, willing, or acting. The relation between it and the incorporators may best be compared to that between pupil and tutor, or between a lunatic and the committee of his estate. By the action of its guardians it can acquire property and if it is to take advantage of contracts it must take the burden also. To allow it possession is difficult, for possession is a matter of fact. Still after hesitation the Roman lawyers made this concession. An action based upon unjust enrichment may lie against it, but it must not be charged with delict. To attempt to punish it is both absurd and unjust.

Now this theory of 'persona ficta' is nearly related to the theory that corporations merely exist by concession of the State. The whole genius of the Roman system of jurisprudence found its highest development in an absolutist public law and an individualistic private law. Hence it was useful in those Italian States where the Prince was establishing despotic power.

This theory came into Germany in Renaissance times and swept all the older forms of law before

it. This law often depended only upon custom and the written system superseded it easily. German States who were anxious to establish the supremacy of the monarch for religious or other reasons found it a useful tool.

In the early nineteenth century, as a result of the Romantic Movement the attention of German lawyers was drawn to the few remaining fragments of the law as it existed in Germany before the Romanist intrusion. In this they found what they conceived to be a truer attitude to the corporation. It was treated as a real person, as having privileges and a permanent group life. This is illustrated by the attitude of German mediaeval law to the Guilds.

In England men managed to maintain consistent group life with fair success by means of the 'trust' concept. But the trust concept, though valuable, failed at times, especially when applied to Churches, of which failure the Free Church of Scotland Appeals is an example.

The Act of 1862, called the 'Magna Charta of co-operative enterprise,' placed legal form and corporate personality within easy reach of any seven or more persons gathered together for a lawful purpose. The corporation theory thus gained ground among us.

A legal view which regards Churches as corporations with a permanent life, capable of development and progress, is juster than that which makes them dependent on the absolute power of the State. Adjustment between Church and State is easier when the Church is granted corporate personality.

But even when this principle has been conceded, the difficulty of deciding what it means in practice still remains. No rules that can be invented cover all possible complexities. However fair they seem to be from a general standpoint, in concrete situations they can produce great friction and injustice in the relation of the Churches and the State.

Such as we can lay down are of a very wide nature.

1. The State should allow all Churches freedom of confession; that is, the Church itself should be regarded as her own supreme authority in doctrinal matters. The State should not presume to dictate to the Churches what they shall believe. Nor does the State venture to do this, in the case of Churches that are merely recognized by it. It is with regard to an Established Church that the difficulty arises, since the State has the duty of a peculiar protection of those Churches, and is often the final Court of Appeal in questions of ecclesiastical law, and Church protection cannot always be dissociated from Church doctrine, so that the State often has jurisdiction as to what that doctrine is. Still, in spite of the difficulty of applying this principle, and the anomalies which often arise, its general validity must be conceded.

2. This freedom can only be conceded to the Church within such limits as are necessary for State security. The State obviously cannot allow the Church to teach anything of a treasonable nature. Nor can it allow the Church to struggle against other religious bodies in such a way as to disturb

the peace of the commonwealth. This again seems a self-evident principle, but it carries with it possibilities of tremendous friction. It is not impossible that allegiance to spiritual principle on the part of the Church may imperil the State. For example, opinion in the Church of England is becoming very strong against the wickedness of war. What would happen were the Church of England to commit herself definitely to the position that in modern civilization war is against the will of God? And what could happen in such a tremendous issue is liable to occur in minor matters. The trouble about this principle is that, although a necessary one, it puts the final authority in the hands of the State.

Bound up with this principle is that all coercive power should be in the hands of the State alone. This is now universally conceded with the exception of a few anachronisms, such as when recently a man was prosecuted for breach of ecclesiastical law.

3. The Church and the State should assist each other and work together as far as possible. In matters of culture and education, the Church can often assist the State, and vice versa. But in doing so the State cannot submit to be controlled by the Church policy in these matters, for it would often bring it into antagonism with other bodies within the State, and would be a reversal to the tendency that originally produced Erastianism.

Because of the vagueness of the above principles, it is not surprising that writers on the relation of the Church and State often fall back on metaphor.

Bluntschli turns to the well-known comparison of the sexes. The State is in the position of the man and the Church of the woman.

‘The State claims for itself the self control of the free manly spirit, while the Church rests upon divine revelation and dedicates her life chiefly to the passive virtues. As mankind is divided into both sexes, each of which has its own justification and task, and who only realize the complete human idea together, so on the whole Church and State form again the same creative antithesis upon which their division and unity rest. On the whole the State is humanity (the nation) as self-conscious will, strong and energetic man; the Church is mankind as pious, virtuous, God-dedicated woman.’¹

Although this metaphor preserves the right of both Church and State to mutual respect and toleration, it cannot be developed far. It is impossible to make the partition of human virtues which Bluntschli suggests between Church and State. Moreover, if the metaphor is intended to mean (as it well might in German) that the relation is one of husband and wife, it is misleading. The Church is the Bride of Christ, not of the State.

In consideration of the relation of Church and State then, we are facing an ultimate problem, a form of the problem of the relation of the Kingdom of God to this present world. As Meinecke says, ‘the borers with which philosophy and history do their work, penetrate through the softer layers easily enough but they shatter on the bed rock of

¹ *Allgemeines Staatsrecht.* J. C. Bluntschli. Stuttgart. 1876. Vol. II. Book 6. Chap. 5.

things.’¹ Beyond her claim to express the Divine life that is within her freely, the Church is unable to commit herself permanently to any rules or plans with regard to the State. Her ambiguous position in the world and the tension in her relation to the State are divinely ordained. She rests not in laws nor schemes but in the Will of God as the Holy Spirit reveals it in new life-situations. The relation between Church and State is part of God’s providence. The Church could only exist as an institution in an ordered Society of which the State is the expression. The State could not hold together without that deeper revelation of man as spiritual and ethical which the Church protects. The contradictions of the Church’s thought with regard to the State reveal the tension in which she lives. In past ages she has regarded it as good, the very providence of God; and as bad, resting upon man’s sinful nature. This contradiction arises from the fact that her dealings are with God and the eternal realm, with things beyond the State, even in a sense beyond herself as an institution. In this modern age when the State is committed to making possible the good life, if only on the lower plane of physical well-being and secular culture, she is bound to encourage and support much that it does. She regards the national life as good and seeks to consecrate it to God. At the same time, she cannot forget that too close an alliance with the State, useful as it has been for the general cultural uplift of mankind, has always led to

¹ *Die Idee der Staatsräson, in der neueren Geschichte.* Second Edition, 1925. Einleitung.

secularization of the Church, and a turning of her attention from her main business. As Hobhouse puts it, the more 'extensive' her outward influence has been, the less 'intensive' the quality of her life has become. Human institutions are subject to the law of sin, and the best that the State can do in certain situations cannot be called holy. The Church cannot be drawn with the State into partaking of this sinfulness although she herself is subject in a degree to it as an institution in the world.

Thus there is no final solution to the problem of Church and State, but for the Church only an unceasing tension in which she faces it in ever-changing forms. This is part of her task in the world, the salvation of man's communal life as well as his individual soul. It is this tension which has ennobled the civilization of the West. It is the struggle between Church and State which has given us cultural and political freedom. For the future, the Church cannot look for the solution of all her problems. The Kingdom of God cannot be completely realized in this world. The Church is more a witness to it than a realization of it. Hence she must expect to meet the problem of Erastianism in ever-varying forms, and to struggle for a complete self-expression against conditions that change continually.

The Church should ever keep in mind Troeltsch's noble words concerning Christian ideals:

'As little as any other power in this our world will they create the Kingdom of God on earth, as a completed social ethical organism: every idea will still be met by brutal facts, every upward

development by interior and exterior checks. There exists no absolute Christian ethic still awaiting its first discovery, but only an overcoming of the changing situations of the world, as also the earlier Christian ethic was not an absolute Christian ethic, but only such an overcoming in its own way. There exists no absolute ethical transformation of material nature, or of human nature, but only a wrestling with them both . . . faith is indeed the very sinews of the battle of life, but life does in very deed remain a battle ever renewed along ever new fronts. For every threatening abyss that is closed a new one yawns before us. The old truth remains true: the Kingdom of God is within us. But we must let our light shine before men in confident and ceaseless labour that they may see our works and may praise our Heavenly Father. The final ends of all humanity lie hidden within His hands.' ¹

¹Quoted in *Essays and Addresses*, Von Hügel. Vol. I. p. 193.

BV

1325703

631

.E84

Evans

Erastianism...

1945

AUG 5

1943

J. N. Williams

1945

A. A. Glein

6-10-46

20

W. K. Robinson

1952

K. M. Todd

Barbara Thier

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

Huron Coll - London

INTERLIBRARY LOAN

M. Galante

SEP 29 1982

Univ. Guelph

Interlibrary Loan

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY



11 089 106

BV631
,E84

13257c3
SWIFT HALL LIBRARY

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY



11 089 106